

AN EXILED KING



*Gustaf Adolf & Queen Frederica Dorotea Willhelmina
at Haga (1809)*

AN EXILED KING

GUSTAF ADOLF IV OF SWEDEN

BY SOPHIE ELKAN

EDITED AND TRANSLATED

BY M. EUGÉNIE KOCH

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CHAPTER XXV

THE LONGED-FOR MEETING

FRIDAY, September 11th, as the Queen was walking in the park, she was met by a messenger bearing a letter from her husband ; but the writing was almost illegible, quite unlike the usual bold, upright, steady hand. In the letter he said that he had gone from Rügen to Karlsrona, and that he was very ill. His physician pronounced it to be an attack of gastric fever, and he was, in truth, very weak and feverish, and begged the Queen to come to him without delay, and bring the elder of the two little Princesses with her.

That was all, but it was enough to cause the Queen the greatest uneasiness. She was for starting that very minute, and burst into paroxysms of tears when told that, at the earliest, the journey could not be undertaken until the following morning. Indeed, so overcome was she, that it was impossible to get a word out of her, and her ladies had to attend to the packing without receiving the smallest directions from her.

The Queen had all along had a kind of foreboding that *something* was going to happen, and had frequently speculated as to the nature of that "something." She had felt the King's absence greatly, and had thought that, most probably, the birth of the Princess Cecilia would be her death. The knowledge that the King was in the war brought her no comfort, and as the little Princess had safely arrived in this vale of tears, and both mother and child were making satisfactory progress, it

left her thoughts more time for dwelling on the prolonged absence of her Consort. Why, oh why, did he always act in direct opposition to what circumstances suggested? Why had he broken the truce with France at the very moment when his allies were forming one on their own account with the French Emperor?

The Queen wondered whether it would come to pass as the King had prophesied, that *he* should drive Buonaparte from his throne, and she tried to picture to herself how Europe would appear when everything was set right according to her husband's incontrovertible laws. Well, *anything* might happen; so many things *had* happened already!—and the Queen blindly accepted the King's word when he told her that he knew the Divine Will with regard to the world, and knew whom God had chosen to carry out that Will! Yet she sincerely wished the King were not always looking for the intervention of Heaven. She could not get herself to believe that the Archangel mentioned in the Book of Revelation *was coming in propria persona* to mete out destruction to Buonaparte and his adherents. She thought it much more likely that her husband would be the instrument chosen for that purpose; but—*anything* might happen, and the vital question was what was going to happen *next*? She wondered how it would feel to be the wife of a man who was like other men, instead of being constantly exposed to the most unaccountable and not always pleasant surprises. Perhaps that would be too curiously calm and peaceful an existence, she thought, as she waited for what should unfold itself next; something out of the common it was bound to be—with a husband like Gustaf Adolf! She wondered whether the Creole who now shared the throne of France had the same sort of feeling, viz. that *anything* might happen with a husband like Buonaparte!

Her reflections had taken that turn on the afternoon before the messenger had arrived, as she was sitting on one of the swings in the Park at Haga, her hands lying idly in her lap; she had been watching the Crown-Prince drilling his two small sisters Sophia and Amelia, whilst the nurse was walking up and down one of the avenues, with the Baby Princess Cecilia in her

arms, trying to get her off to sleep ; her monotonous lullaby had made Her Majesty quite drowsy, but a remark of the Crown-Prince's, uttered in loud, rough tones, made her start. He said to his little sisters : " When once *I* am King, I shall *make* you obey me, you will see."

She could not help smiling at the boy's palpable imitation of his father's voice. Looking up, she perceived the messenger approaching ; and as she read, the paper shook in her hands. So that was what was to happen—the King had returned to Karlscrona sick—what more ? There was nothing in the letter to say how the army had fared, nothing about the fate of Stralsund, nothing about defeating and turning Napoleon out of France ; perhaps Buonaparte had defeated the King, and might be intending to turn *him* out of Sweden ; but there was not a word about that either ; still, many things might happen yet !

The Queen heaved a deep sigh, which brought with it a fit of unrestrained weeping. She was genuinely distressed at the King's illness, and very angry that her journey must be delayed. She informed her ladies that they must be prepared to travel post-haste, as she must *fly* to her husband's bedside.

When in the early hours of Saturday morning the Queen, with the little Princess, was on her way to her carriage, she did not even give herself time to take leave of the various members of the Government, who had come all the way to Nya Haga at that uncomfortable hour to show their respect and sympathy. Not a word, not a smile nor a bow did she vouchsafe to them as she hurried through the rooms—she was positively rude.

Never had the suite had such a journey. The Queen just *flew* to Karlscrona ; the first day they went as far as Norrköping, the second as far as Eksjö, and Karlscrona was reached late at night on the third. At the gates of the city she was received by Admiral von Puke, who escorted her carriage on horseback, followed by his staff. The magistrates and burghers had also assembled at the gates, and at the " Residence," whither Gustaf Adolf had been taken to Admiral von Puke's quarters, his suite met the Queen, whilst men from both Army

and Navy stood in line on either side of the stairs. Some of the garrison paraded the square in front of the "Residence," letting off occasional salvos, and a Royal Salute was fired from the fort. But the Queen neither saw nor noticed this homage. As soon as the carriage stopped she jumped out, before anyone had time to offer help; without taking the slightest notice of any of those who had come to meet her, she ran straight into the King's bedchamber.

Gustaf Adolf lay in a large fourposter, looking so ill and wan in his white night attire that the Queen burst into tears as she bent over him and kissed him; he took her hand and laid it on his burning forehead.

"That is cooling," said he. "I shall soon get well now. Sit down there and don't cry. Everything has gone off creditably. In the compact Toll made with General Brune my name has not been mentioned, and therefore not "*his*" either. Toll shall be promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal for that."

He could say no more; he lay back in silence; but when the Queen attempted to withdraw her hand, he whispered: "Let it stay there, it is so cooling."

Then he tried to speak again, but with many breaks: "My troops were allowed to go free . . . from Rügen . . . with all their provisions . . . on board the Swedish transports and warships. I lost Pomerania, but when I gave up *it*, I got compensation somewhere else. The English have offered me Surinam, but I would rather have Zealand; Zealand is a fine province."

"Are you wandering?" asked the Queen in alarm.

"Not now; the fever has left me," he answered; "but I have been ill since the end of August. In Stralsund and Rügen I was so bad that I hardly knew what I was doing; I was persuaded to go home by Toll, Wrede, and the rest. I was carried to the ship on a mattress with a blanket wrapped round me, just as they carried Charles XII. from the fortress of Fredericsshall; only then *he* was dead; *I* am not quite dead yet. Who is that knocking at the door? Is it Death?"

He had started up in bed, and sat with burning eyes fixed on the entrance. The Queen rose from the stool she had been occupy-

ing and went to the door, which she scarcely dared open ; but when a second gentle knock came she half unclosed it, and saw Countess Oxenstjerna standing there, leading the little Princess Sophia by the hand.

"Your Majesty went away in such haste that the Princess was unable to keep up," the Countess said apologetically.

"Was it Death ? Bring him in . . . quick . . . I can't bear to be kept waiting. . . . I want everything settled on the instant," cried the King's voice from the other end of the room.

"It is our little daughter Sophia, whom you wished me to bring ; may she come in ? "

The King nodded.

The poor tired little girl could hardly keep her eyes open, and she was afraid of her father. Like most children, she was frightened at the sight of a sick person in bed, and struggled when the Queen wanted to lead her towards it.

But the King lay so still, and looked so good and kind when he beckoned to her with his thin, transparent hand, that her fears quite vanished. She let go the Queen's hand, rushed to the bedside, and kissed the poor thin fingers, resting on the richly embroidered silk coverlet, over and over again.

"Don't cry, Papa, don't," she lisped. "Mamma and I have come, and we will nurse you and make you well. Only don't cry, Papa dear . . . "

The Queen's arrival did the King an immense amount of good ; indeed, it seemed to put new life into him. The following day he was already so much better that he was able to take a short drive with her and the Princess in a close carriage ; they went alone without anyone in attendance. They entered the carriage in the inner court, and passed out by a gate reserved for exit in case of fire only, because the King did not wish to be seen. The Queen spent the whole day with him, and he liked the little Princess about him ; but she was told she must sit still on a footstool and not stir, as the slightest movement made the King start, and he was still so weak and ill. Only one day passed after the Queen's arrival without anything particular occurring. She knew that what actually happened the next day would, under other circumstances,

have been very gratifying to the King ; *now* it was only likely to fret and worry him. The war frigate *Fröja* had anchored in the roads off Karlserona, having on board two of the Bourbon Princes. The King, Louis XVIII, and his brother the Duke of Angoulême ! Gustaf Adolf had invited them to meet him on the Isle of Rügen, but there had been such terrific seas and gales for the last fortnight that they had been obliged to cruise about in the North Sea, quite unable to land at Rügen ; so, of course, when the King arrived at Karlserona they were completely ignorant that he had been forced, by most regrettable circumstances, to leave Rügen, and that at this present time he was lying sick at Karlserona ; he had been expecting the French Princes with solemn emotion ; it would be a stupendous moment when he should welcome on his own territory the noble men whose cause he had so chivalrously espoused and made his own. Every time he had contemplated that first meeting with the man of whom he invariably spoke as " King of France," he had pictured to himself how it would be, what he should do or say, and what the unfortunate monarch and his brother, whose champion he had constituted himself, would say to his invitation and the grand and noble plans conceived on their behalf. They should not feel humiliated at the weight of the tremendous obligations they were under to him, and they should see what a privilege the King of Sweden esteemed it, to be the only one who, at all times and without any selfish aim for himself, had fought for *their* rights, as other kings and rulers *should* have done. And he would offer them shelter in his own dominions. . . .

Now, when the King heard of their long-deferred and inopportune arrival, he grew exceedingly sorry and depressed that, under existing grievous conditions, he was debarred from enjoying the much-desired meeting.

It was not only the King and Queen who were disappointed ; the whole of the small Court at Karlserona were much upset, for nobody knew what was to be done with the august visitors who had arrived at such an unlucky moment. There ought to have been dinners, *déjeûners*, suppers, and festivities of all kinds given in their honour, but only the most necessary china,

plate and glass had been packed up in a hurry and taken, and no one was in the least prepared to entertain Royal guests when their own King lay sick, weak, and ailing. Gustaf Adolf himself felt sure that the august travellers, after the fatigues and discomforts of their sea voyage, would require at least one whole day's rest, and instructed his Equerry, Count Munck, to proceed to their quarters in Buuth (the banker's) house, and in his (the King's) name welcome His Majesty the "King of France" and His Royal Highness the Duke of Angoulême, and express His Majesty's hopes that he might have the honour of receiving them on the morrow at half-past ten of the clock.

The half-hour after ten was striking from the tower of the German church as Marshal Count Munck, who had fetched the Bourbon Princes from their quarters, commanded the carriage to stop, and preceded them up the stairs, on either side of which was drawn up a guard of honour composed of men belonging to the Admiralty, and into the hall where those who owned the French Order, *Pour le mérite militaire*, were assembled.

Her Majesty's two Ladies, Countess Oxenstjerna and Countess Fröhlich, were waiting in the antechamber, and conducted the "King of France" and the Duke of Angoulême to the door of the King's private room, which they entered alone.

As the door opened the King, with a great effort, rose from the couch on which he had been sitting with the Queen; he straightened his gaunt figure, and shifted the ribbon of the Order of the Seraphim on his blue uniform a little more to the right, but his weakness and excitement were so great that he was obliged to lean hard against the table to prevent falling. His heart beat fast in eager anticipation, whilst his gaze was riveted on the huge figure which entered first.

He had frequently seen portraits of this man, and so was prepared for the thick-set frame and the round, red face, so typical of the Bourbons, bearing a stronger likeness than one would have thought to the portraits of his unfortunate brother, Louis XVI. But, however that might be, the King of Sweden was extremely disappointed, for he had expected something quite different in the man who now advanced towards him.

More dignity in his looks, a more upright, military bearing, more seriousness, and less bonhomie. The curious swaying of the upper portion of Louis XVIII's body, and the constant scraping and fidgeting with his enormous feet, which he never seemed able to keep still for a minute, either sitting or standing, made the weak, suffering King intensely nervous. So disillusioned, indeed, was he, that he had the greatest difficulty in bringing out the conventional words of welcome which had once burnt on his tongue, and to submit to being embraced and kissed on either cheek. Could this common-looking, rubicund, hail-fellow-well-met individual, on whom his thoughts had so constantly been centred from his earliest boyhood, indeed be the man to whom he had only a short while ago written to propose that he should put himself at the head of a scratch regiment and join his army? and whom, in words supposed to have been inspired by the Deity Himself, he had entreated to let himself be solemnly crowned in the Cathedral at Wismar or Greifswald as "King of France and of Navarre"?

Gustaf Adolf was much too weak and enfeebled to be able to bear long with the overpowering presence of Louis XVIII. Neither did the Duke of Angoulême, whom he had to welcome next, answer his expectations. He was short in stature and weakly, phlegmatic and insignificant. The King stood silent and looked on as the "King of France" kissed Queen Frederica's hand with *empressement*, and made her most flowery speeches. Never had *she* looked more charming; she was attired in a richly-embroidered gown of East Indian muslin, and the lilac silk turban she wore on her head was interwoven with gold, and suited her magnificently. When the Duke of Angoulême was proceeding to pay his respects to the Queen, though in quieter fashion than his exalted brother, his delight and surprise were also awakened. But Gustaf Adolf was not equal to standing any longer, and gave his Royal guests a sign to be seated. The "King of France" took a seat on the large mahogany sofa by the side of the Queen, and Gustaf Adolf sank into an armchair with a half-suppressed groan, and motioned the Duke of Angoulême to another by his side. He could not take his eyes off Louis XVIII, who sat rocking his

unwieldy body to and fro, and shuffling with his feet at every word he spoke. The more closely the King watched his fidgety visitor, the more stiff and starched he became himself. He pulled himself together with a mighty effort, saying to himself: "I will *make* him sit still and talk sense;" and as he was well aware that his very glances could frighten people into obedience, he began to stare at his beloved guest (!) with such persistency and force of will in his eyes, that the Queen did not know how to keep from laughing outright. She did not fail to notice, however, how annoyed and out of temper the King was getting, and fearing an outburst of the storm she saw gathering, she did her best to prevent the visitors perceiving that anything was wrong. But it was not long before she discovered that her extra amiability was not to the King's liking either, and she expected every minute that he would turn on her with a thundering, "*Taisez-vous, Madame,*" if he did not fall into a swoon first, which he had every appearance of doing.

The King felt as though he were in a bad dream from which he could not wake. Was *this* the long-desired fulfilment of his day-dream of a meeting with the Bourbon Princes? The "King of France" expressed, *en passant*, his gratitude for the King's never-failing sympathy in his cause, but he did it in such very curious phraseology that to the King's sensitive ear the thanks sounded more like a subtle *reproach* that the King of Sweden had hoisted the Bourbon flag *in* season and *out* of season. He seemed to upbraid him for his over-zealousness, and to make a virtue of his own apathy and resignation. Of course, it *might* not so have been meant; at any rate, the King chose to take it that way as he sat there in his weak state, with his nerves strained to the utmost. He was pained and wearied by Louis' continually swaying movements as he bent to talk to the Queen, or turned towards himself, and the ceaseless shifting of Louis' feet, encased in shoes with jewelled buckles, nearly drove the grave, quiet Swedish King out of his wits. When the "King of France" took out of the side-pocket of his coat a beautiful snuff-box set with diamonds, and bearing a miniature of Marie Antoinette on the lid, and lifted a small

pinch of snuff up to his huge nostrils, with much rocking and swaying as he did so, the King felt inclined to cry out : " For goodness' sake keep still, or I shall not know what I am doing ! " It was not only the rocking and tramping and general fidgeting which so got on the King's nerves, it was also the foolish and frivolous conversation of the French Princes which irritated him beyond endurance. He had a strong desire, as he sat there, to tell them that the time had come when the BEAST should be dethroned and *they* restored. Instead of that, he had to sit by and listen to the paltry compliments the King of France was paying to the Queen, whilst the Duke of Angoulême regaled him with minute details of his recent experience of the horrors of sea-sickness ! The King had felt equal to talking for *hours* about the affairs of France, Europe, and the world in general, but he could not stand that nonsensical chatter many *minutes* longer. Presently a lackey appeared to hand round chocolate in silver cups. Gustaf Adolf sat with his cup of chocolate in his hand and watched with increasing annoyance how the French King was endeavouring to help the Queen to cream, whilst awkwardly holding his own cup. There will be an accident presently, he thought, and, sure enough, what with his shuffling and what with his fidgeting, King Louis speedily managed to upset his whole cup over the Queen's beautiful gown ! Gustaf Adolf had turned very white during the commotion following the accident, and the Queen was greatly troubled to see that he was on the verge of fainting.

One thing was certain, and that was that as soon as possible an end must be put to this painful situation, and whilst the clumsy Royal visitor was doing his best to remove the ugly brown stain from the charming costume he had but now been eulogising in extravagant terms, with his lace handkerchief, overwhelming the Queen with profuse apologies for having been " bewitched by the dazzling rays from her beautiful star-like eyes," so that he forgot to pay proper attention to the cup in his hand, she, with a sweet smile (which she most devoutly hoped her Consort would not consider either frivolous or untruthful), said : " The fault was mine entirely. I did not look, and inadvertently pushed against Your Majesty's elbow."

Gustaf Adolf moved uneasily in his chair, but he said nothing ; and the Queen continued : “ But as I cannot show myself in this soiled dress, I beg Your Majesty’s permission to be allowed to retire to my rooms, and offer my sincere apologies for curtailing the interview so highly appreciated by the King and myself.”

Before the Queen had finished speaking Gustaf Adolf rose. He felt that his patience had come to an end. He put out his hand in token of farewell to the “ King of France,” and once more submitted to his parting salutation.

When the door had closed upon the two French Princes the King relapsed into a long silence ; then he suddenly said to the Queen, who was ruefully contemplating her ruined garments :

“ We leave this place the day after to-morrow.”

“ The day after to-morrow ? The nineteenth ? Saint Frederica’s day ? ” cried the Queen aghast.

“ Yes, for that very reason ; if we were here on your name’s day we should have to ask *them* to a banquet, or to an entertainment, and *I cannot* get on with them.”

At that moment the King’s white setter, which had been shut up during the visit, came bounding into the room and made straight for him, licking him and fawning upon him with every demonstration of joy. His master patted him and took off his collar, then he sighed deeply, and said half-aloud : “ Ah, well ; all the same, right is right, and remains right to all time. And there can be no manner of doubt that God *has* chosen *me* to destroy the BEAST.”

CHAPTER XXVI

ERIC XIV TO THE FORE

GUSTAF ADOLF was very anxious to find out what the comet now visible between the constellation of Hercules and the Northern Crown might portend ; it had first been seen towards the end of September, when he moved from Karlserona to Helsingborg ; the journey to Stockholm had had to be postponed. *If—ah!—if* he could only know what the comet meant ! War, famine, sickness, or some other misfortune, the people said. Oh, yes ! Invasion and war—but with whom ?—sickness and trouble—for whom ?

He, who had lately had such signal reverses, and who was still weak and nervous after serious illness, was naturally perplexed by many things which under normal conditions would have appeared as simple and as clear as daylight. Surely, doubting and hesitating was a sore sin, when one was certain that one had trusted oneself and the “righteous cause” to the help and guidance of Providence. How would *he* fare who saw and felt that other men doubted when they should believe, and believed when they should doubt ? The great secret was that men would not acknowledge that that which prospers in the world and is crowned with brilliant success is only a snare and a delusion of the Evil One, and which, if not brought to naught to-day, is sure to turn to dust and ashes on the morrow ; but people who feel like that worry themselves into depths of despair one day, and are in a state of giddy and foolish elation the next—especially if at this juncture a comet should appear in the heavens ! Everyone was anxious for Peace, but was not that comet a sign that God intended men to go to war ? So, at least, the King interpreted it ; neither would he be cajoled into making peace with France, though

Toll assured him that it could be done easily within twenty-four hours, and without his being obliged to break with his English allies, if he would only desist from further advocating the claims of Louis XVIII. But Gustaf Adolf was obstinately determined to uphold Louis XVIII, as heretofore, so the comet must surely point to hostilities with France.

On no account would the King make peace with France, or go against England, for he imagined that he could recoup himself for the loss of Pomerania by seizing Zealand and Norway with the help of the English ; that was what the comet meant to *him*. War and battle it might be, but leading to victory, to triumphs and acquisition of fair lands, *if* the King were not hampered by paltry and mean calculations of his Parliament and Exchequer, and assertions that it was impossible for his country to wage a successful war with, so to say, the whole universe. How could the people be expected to understand signs or to interpret prophecies ? What did Wachtmeister, Ehrenheim, Lagerheim, Ugglas or Rosenblad know about the purposes or the Will of the Almighty ?

Gustaf Adolf had been intensely irritable and depressed, but it had been a bright day for him when the English fleet, with over four hundred ships, had sailed past Helsingborg, favoured by the most beautiful weather and helpful breezes, on its way to the North Sea, and when, on passing the house then occupied by His Majesty, salutes had been fired, first from the Admiral's ship, and then from the others. He could not keep still when the firing began. He called the Queen's attention to it, and took the little Princess by the hand, and they all went out on the bridge to see the fleet sail by. The Admiral's ship had laid-to, and the English Admiral Gambier and Lord Cathcart had come on shore to pay their respects to the King, and he invited them and some of the officers to a *déjeuner dinatoire*, at which he proposed the health of the King and Queen of England, a toast to the English fleet, and prosperity to England's army and people. In return, the health of the King and Queen of Sweden and other toasts were proposed by the English Admiral. The King sat there with beating heart, for he was still not very strong, and he persuaded himself that there could be no possible

doubt now but that the comet was a sure sign that he should succeed in taking Norway and Zealand from the Danes.

But Denmark and the Danes had not forgotten that the Swedish fleet had arrived too late to take part in the naval encounter in the Roads before Kopenhagen in 1801, when the Danish and Swedish forces were in alliance against England, and great indignation was felt in Denmark that the King of Sweden, the grandson of their own Sovereign, should sumptuously entertain (and that almost in sight of Denmark) the faithless English, who were on their way home, after having bombarded Kopenhagen and almost annihilated the Danish fleet. The honours which the Danish warships, forcibly taken from the Roads off Kopenhagen, had been *obliged* to pay to the King of Sweden on his passage through the Sound, secretly meant war between Sweden and Denmark as soon as ever the latter should have recovered and be sufficiently prepared.

The King also determined to send back to the Emperor Alexander the Order of St. Andrew which the latter had given him, for the same reason which had made him return the Order of the Black Eagle to the King of Prussia (namely, because both Orders had recently been bestowed on Buonaparte), much against the advice of the Swedish Ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg, Count Stedingk, who was inclined to think that this action on the part of his Sovereign would irritate the Emperor Alexander still more against him, and possibly lead to hostilities ; and it was not long before Stedingk had to inform the King that the massing of troops in St. Petersburg and at the Finnish-Russian frontier was intended, according to the Emperor Alexander's own words, to *force* Sweden to make peace with France and declare against England. But Gustaf Adolf had no intention whatever to be compelled to do either, by his imperial brother-in-law or any other man. He said he could well believe that the Emperor Alexander was weak and cunning, but he could not imagine that he would stoop so low as to do Buonaparte's errands, and let a Russian army invade Finland from sheer greed of gain or fear of offending the Emperor of the French ; neither would Gustaf Adolf believe that the comet portended war with Russia.

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The good townsfolk of Stockholm came to the conclusion that the King disliked both their city and themselves, and why did he encourage this belief by constantly postponing his return? The Stockholmers wondered whether he was under the impression that he was more beloved and the people more loyal to him in other parts of the country than in his own capital? In the provinces, naturally, people were always disposed to believe that all unpleasant disturbances originated in the city of Stockholm, but many of the officers who came back from Pomerania to their country homes knew better. In criticising the war and its results these brave fellows put all the blame on the King as their brothers-in-arms from Stockholm had done. These country-bred men, too, could tell many a funny story about him over their teacups or card tables, and the listeners in the little villages laughed at them quite as heartily as the Stockholmers, and were as vastly amused as they at His Majesty's theatrical aping of Charles XII, and the humiliating retreat from Stralsund.

It was not only the highest in office at Stockholm who blamed the King when anything was neglected or forgotten. Their colleagues at Gothenburg and other provincial towns were equally anxious to cast the responsibility off their own shoulders on to his, and with such examples before them it is not to be wondered at that the smaller fry, both military and civil, should do likewise all over the country. Therefore there could be no reason why the King should not now conclude his stay in the provinces and return to Stockholm, where loyal preparations were being made for his and the Queen's reception on December 19th, when the august couple were expected from Strömsholm, where they had arrived the previous day.

There were to be grand illuminations all along the streets through which they were to pass, and set pieces of elegant and clever design were also to be shown. The inhabitants of Stockholm certainly did their best. In the windows of every house candles were set, some in rough wooden bowls, others in silver or brass candelabra, and some of the people had set up typical pieces of their own devising; never had such a display been seen

in the capital before. In one house in the Stora Nygatan was exhibited a piece representing "Sven" (Sweden) sitting by an altar, holding a miniature of the King in her right hand, and one of the Queen in her left ; an angel knelt by the altar, holding a scroll on which were inscribed these words :

"What sure defence shall shield your land,
Where every heart adores you !"

The most beautiful and cleverly thought-out piece, however, was set up at the farther end of the Norrtullgatan. It represented the goddess Pallas between the two goddesses of War and Peace, and on the pedestal was written :

"Thy wisdom, Great King, and thy faithfulness
Will immortalise thy name and our independence !"

There could not have been anything grander, and a crowd stood before it in admiration the whole evening ; the people, in fact, were as closely packed there as in all the other streets. No one could accuse the Stockholmers of not showing enough loyalty to their King. Some of the burghers waited for him at the gates, having brought with them crimson ropes wherewith to draw his carriage. The exact time of his arrival had not been made known, and hopes had been entertained that the Royal pair might have reached the entrance of the city about nine o'clock. The people waited till long past ten, but then they began to grow tired and impatient, especially as a depressing rumour had gained currency that the King was not coming at all, only the Queen. It appeared that news to that effect had reached the city already at noon, but had not been made public. Nobody quite believed it ; surely the King *must* be coming ! But no At half-past ten the Royal equipages duly arrived at the gates, but no King was there ; only the Queen and the little Princess. The cheers for Her Majesty were but feeble, and, as usual, her acknowledgments of the same were of the scantiest ; the crowd gradually dispersed, and each one wended his or her way home, weary and disappointed, wondering how long the King meant to stay at Strömsholm, for it was only after arriving there that he had changed his plans. Could it really be his intention again to spend the winter



MEDALLION OF GUSTAF ADOLF IV
AND QUEEN FREDERICA

away from Stockholm? But he always kept his plans secret to the last minute, and certainly had the gift of springing most unexpected surprises on all and sundry. It was said that he was occupied from morning till night with business of State which had accumulated during his illness, and this press of work was given as a pretext for the postponement of his return to Stockholm. At last one day tidings were received in the city that His Majesty would arrive about eight o'clock in the evening of December 23rd. So fresh candles were stuck into the wooden and brass candelabra, and lights were lighted and the town illuminated as it had been a few evenings before; the set-pieces with the Royal monograms were, of course, not so brilliant or appropriate as they would have been had their Majesties made their entry together, as had been expected. In these, however, no alterations could be made, but where the King's monogram appeared alone, a luminous inscription of "Long live the King!" had been added.

The town was almost as brilliant as it had been four nights before, and the streets were filled with a like multitude, but the spirit of the people was not by any means so joyful and enthusiastic as the first time they had waited to welcome back their King. Even the most loyal of loyal Stockholmers was apt to get weary of seeing the same illuminations and decorations twice over in the space of four days, the same arrangements in the windows, the same patriotic inscriptions, ending, perchance, in the same disappointment!

As the clock struck the people streamed towards the gates where the King was expected, but . . . the clocks struck nine and the clocks struck ten, and still no sign of Gustaf Adolf or his suite! With every quarter that struck the impatience of the crowd increased. The masses grumbled, and the soft-hearted feared he might have met with an accident; maybe the same as had befallen the Grand Duke of Baden six years before, which God forbid! Perhaps the King's sleigh had overturned and he had been killed, and therefore could not come. The lights were kept burning in the city until four in the morning, at which hour only Count Gyllenborg, Baron Boye, the Secretary-in-Chief Hedenstjerna, the Cabinet

Minister Baron Wetterstedt, and the rest of His Majesty's suite arrived. These gentlemen brought word that the King and Count Horn had started from Strömholm *before* them, and that they, therefore, had not the remotest notion of where the King might be at that moment. Those civic officials who had been waiting at the gates since eight o'clock the evening before did not worry their brains with speculations, but hurried back to their respective homes half-frozen, tired, and sleepy, and the loyalty with which they had been ready to greet their Sovereign *then*, suffered no slight diminution in the early hours of that icy winter's morning. It was half-past seven the next morning when the King arrived in a common peasant sleigh driven by Count Horn . . . he had been to Gripsholm ! What on earth he wanted to do there no one could guess. He had worked himself up to such a pitch that he felt he *could* not make his entry into Stockholm as he was expected to do. What *was* the good of the people there illuminating every window in every street and alley of the city, and shrieking themselves hoarse with cheering ? Gustaf Adolf knew what he knew. Disloyalty, anarchism, and socialism were rife in Stockholm ; of what avail to whiten their sepulchres ? The King knew he should find black shadows lurking in the dark rooms behind the lit-up windows, and his sharp ear would detect murmurs of discontent and rebellion beneath the cheers. If he could have succeeded in carrying out his wish, and could have restored calm and order in the world, he knew that his people would have been beside themselves with genuine delight ; but since Providence in its inscrutable wisdom had ordered it otherwise, the King had to derive comfort and consolation from the consciousness that he had done what he believed to have been imperatively needful for his own and his country's good. But his people seemed slow to comprehend that. They only saw that he had failed, and as they did not understand, why should they simulate a joy they did not feel at his home-coming ? which was particularly painful to himself. Therefore he had slunk into the town unnoticed, for he had to get there *some* time ; and when they reached the gates he had said to his lieutenant : " I cannot stop here."

These words he repeated to the Queen as soon as he saw her ; but she retorted laughingly that seeing that it was Christmas Eve he would have no alternative, and must fain content himself.

On Christmas Day the King again said, but more emphatically than before : " I cannot possibly remain here."

The Queen could only shrug her shoulders. The day after Christmas Day one of the small Princesses was taken ill and lay in a high fever, and the Queen was too anxious about her child to take much notice of her husband's irritable and oft-reiterated assurance that he neither could nor would remain in Stockholm. On the third day he came into the room where his Consort was sitting by the little patient's bedside ; the child was asleep, and she gave him a sign not to wake her. For a time he was silent, then he suddenly burst out : " I cannot bear staying here any longer."

The Queen pretended to understand that he meant he could not bear to stay any longer in the sick room, so she took him into an adjoining one and sat down on a sofa to listen resignedly to his ebullition of temper. He paced restlessly up and down, turning with irritating haste each time.

" I cannot remain in Stockholm," he said ; " to-morrow we go to Gripsholm ; there is no necessity for my remaining any longer. I have paid my respects to my mother, and called upon the Duke and Duchess and settled the most urgent affairs of State."

The Queen turned very red. " I cannot leave the little one," she said ; " I am not going."

" What nonsense is that ? " answered the King angrily, stopping short in front of her.

" Only that Gripsholm is the most dreadful place in the world," replied the Queen in a like angry tone.

" One must be very dreadful oneself to find that place dreadful," said the King with much irritation.

" Then, indeed, what must *they* be who find even Stockholm unbearable ? " retorted the Queen.

" Oh, that is a very different matter," answered the King,

resuming his aggravating promenade in wild haste. "My father was murdered in this city, and I can never forget that. Never for a moment, when I am here, can I forget what I went through in the days after he was shot, how it was rumoured that the town would be set on fire, and that I should be delivered to the tender mercies of the populace, or be put out of the way by hired assassins."

"But the city never *was* set on fire, nor were *you* murdered," said the Queen, in a voice she tried to make sound as if she were joking. "What purpose does it serve to worry yourself and others with lugubrious ideas and fancies?"

For a few minutes the King was silent, then he said: "If one could *help* it, I suppose one would not do it. I am not responsible for my low spirits; I happen not to be exactly like other people, and I am weary, oh! so utterly weary! I think I have been weary and tired all my life; it is so inconceivably wearying and disheartening to be always waiting, to be always swimming against the tide."

"But why, then, do it? Why not sometimes swim *with* the tide?"

"*You* can ask me that?" almost shouted the King in answer; then he added in rather gentler tone and pointing up to Heaven: "That is why."

It was no easy task to bring the conversation down to more ordinary subjects, so the Queen made no remark; but after a while Gustaf Adolf resumed: "As I said, it is no use; I cannot stay here. Everybody is against me, and thwarts me, and sees nothing where *I* see great possibilities. Come to Gripsholm with me to-morrow; I am so miserable here."

The Queen shook her head. "I will *not* go to Gripsholm. Why do you always think of yourself, never of others? You talk about *your* father, but *my* memory, too, is good, and neither can *I* forget that *my* father died near Gripsholm, and how the ghosts haunted the place at that time; and if Your Majesty saw and heard nothing, you were certainly the only one excepted."

The King stopped abruptly; he turned very pale and bit his lip.

"It is not true that your father died near Gripsholm ; he died many miles away, at Arboga," he said.

The Queen burst into tears.

"We can leave the child here," he said more kindly ; "but do you come with me. I am so terribly lonely with my sad thoughts when you are not with me," he said persuasively. "Don't be obstinate ; I cannot bear obstinate people !"

But the Queen only wept. "I won't go to Gripsholm," she sobbed ; "I won't."

"A time may be coming when you will beg and pray to be allowed to go, and won't be able," replied the King gloomily.

"When ?" asked the Queen, alarmed, and looking up.

"Well, I don't know."

"Never, I know ; *never* shall I beg and pray to be allowed to go to Gripsholm—never !" cried the Queen emphatically.

"Do as you like, do as you like," said the King, with icy coldness ; "either you come, or you do not ; whichever way it is, *I* shall go to-morrow at three o'clock."

Next day the King did as he had said, and three o'clock saw him start with Count Horn, orders having been left for his private secretary, Baron Wetterstedt, to follow next day.

To the great satisfaction of the Court and Stockholm in general the Queen remained behind, and the ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting sincerely hoped that she would persist in her resolve to stay, and by so doing prevail upon the King to return, which he was, anyway, bound to do on January 24th for the unveiling of the statue of Gustaf III, which had been fixed to take place on the late King's birthday. Moreover, the King's presence, surely, was most desirable at this period of universal perplexity, when every nerve had to be strained to make preparations in case the threats from Russia should culminate in a serious war, which *might* happen at any moment. But the King seemed to care little to strengthen himself against Russia, nor even to lead the Finnish fleet. He maintained that he had said to Ehrenheim, "There is a just Providence," when the latter had tried to impress upon him that his obstinacy in holding out against France, and declining to close his

ports to the English was more likely to precipitate disasters from the side of Russia than to avert them.

On the return journey to Stockholm, also, Gustaf Adolf had interrogated sundry of the bishops and eminent clergy whether they did not believe that, according to the Book of Revelation, the power of Buonaparte would soon be at an end, and that it was to be *he*, the King, who was to hurl him from the throne. Probably their answers satisfied *him*, but they could certainly not gratify any who had property in Finland.

The Queen could not resist longer, and the King got his way. On January 5th, just eight days after the departure of her spouse, the Queen and Court moved to Gripsholm. No one could exactly make out *why* she should have done so, her fear and loathing of the place being well known. It might have been that she dreaded the King's displeasure even more than the ghosts, and was afraid that if she did not go there *now*, of her own accord, she might one fine day be banished to Gripsholm, or could it really have been that her tender heart could not bear the thought of the King's loneliness within those gloomy precincts, or, could it have been true that she, indeed, honestly *loved* the King and longed for his presence, as some of her ladies affirmed, when they were parted? There were so many conjectures and rumours current that it was difficult to say what was true and what was false.

Was it true that, when at Gripsholm, Count Wachtmeister had observed that the King would never listen to reason, and that he had prophesied that the hand which signed a treaty with Buonaparte was doomed to wither, and that he was not going to imperil his soul's salvation? "I will rather go quite away first," the King had said, "and all who are honest and true may go with me," he was said to have added.

Now every man considers himself honest and true, but with regard to following the King much, of course, depended upon *where* His Majesty intended going, and *how*. As a ruling Sovereign, or . . . ?

What was the remark he had made to the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting, Countess Oxenstjerna, one day, at dinner? Baron Ramel had been present, and had heard and repeated it.

"Do you remember, Countess," the King had said, "Christiansfeld, in Holstein, that place we went to see a few years ago on our route home through Denmark?"

"Of course I do, Your Majesty," the Countess had replied; "the Moravian settlement there was most interesting."

"Yes, and how beautifully everything was arranged," the King had continued; "and *there* I mean to seek refuge when Buonaparte drives me out of the world."

If it were his intention to fly thither he would certainly have to go alone, unless the Queen and her children accompanied him. Christiansfeld, indeed!

Even in winter, Gripsholm would be infinitely preferable!

It was not cheering to listen to such prognostications and forebodings, moreover, as the King's lugubrious predictions *might* come true some time or another, to his and the country's sorrow. To make matters worse the King and Queen had had a rather serious "difference." The Queen, it was said, had most earnestly expostulated with him anent his proposed return to Gripsholm after the Christmas festivities in Stockholm. She had positively declared that nothing would induce *her* to return there this winter; she wished to remain in the capital with her children, to which the King had replied that Her Majesty seemed to have been happy enough without them when she had been far away from them for nineteen months in Germany, so that she might very well content herself for *two* months when they were so near. But when she refused to be talked over he had said the most unkind things to her, reproaching her with lack of affection and capriciousness which, he said, destroyed all his domestic happiness; that his marriage had been a grievous failure, and that he constantly regretted the love of his young days. These may not have been exactly the words he used, but the Queen had certainly been as much put out as the King, and they had parted in anger. He shut himself up in his room, and was no more seen that day; the Queen took part in the evening's recreation, but was in very low spirits, and her eyes were red with weeping. Her attempt at self-assertion was soon gone. After a sleepless night, passed in repentance and remorse, the tearful Queen had

knocked at the King's door early in the morning, but had not been admitted; then she had written him a touching little note, and received no answer. Subsequently, on January 22nd, she left Gripsholm, still unreconciled with the King, who did not even unbend to bid her "good-bye" as she took her seat in the carriage ready to start. He, with his suite, left the following day.

The ceremony of unveiling the statue of Gustaf III, for which occasion the King and Queen had come to Stockholm, had been both touching and brilliant, but the next day already the King informed the Court that *he* should return to Gripsholm in a day or two. The first time he mentioned it the Queen looked up at him entreatingly, and softly whispered, "*We*"; but the King shook his head, and peremptorily said: "*I* shall return to Gripsholm on the twenty-eighth at the latest."

The Queen was greatly perturbed; it was bad to live with the King when he was displeased, but it was far worse to part in anger. She knew by experience that no sooner was he gone than she could do nothing but think of him and his loneliness without her; so she went to him with tears in her beautiful blue eyes, and said: "Forgive me, and take me with you to Gripsholm; do not go away and leave me all alone, please don't."

But His Majesty was not in a conciliatory mood. He had made up his mind to be lonely, and lonely he must be!

"It is not much use to ask for forgiveness, and be forgiven, and then do the same thing again," he answered.

He thought the Queen had behaved very badly during their stay at Gripsholm, and who could vouch for it that she would keep her promise *now*, and behave better? Her self-will and ill-temper had been a sorry example to her subjects. All this the King told her, and said he would see, as time went on, whether he would grant her request or not.

"You were right when you said the day would come when I should beg to be allowed to go to Gripsholm; so do let me!" she cried.

"That was not exactly the way I meant it when I said it," replied the King, looking straight ahead, as if he saw something

not visible to her: "I meant something quite different; nothing to do with *me*."

"Oh, take me with you; your words have made me so nervous!"

"No; I am going to Gripsholm alone, with my private secretary and one gentleman in attendance." And so he did!

However, it was not long before he was obliged to return to Stockholm, where a courier from Russia had arrived with tidings from Stedingk that several columns of Russians were advancing towards the frontier. The Ambassador further mentioned in his letter that it was the French who had ordered the advance to the frontier of Finland, but that the Emperor Alexander, before crossing the boundaries of Swedish-Finland, was going to issue a proclamation asking whether Gustaf Adolf were willing to break with England or not? But the King would *not* break with England. His desire was to send Armfelt to Finland; but Armfelt declined to serve under Klingspor, so the latter was sent there, though Armfelt promised to hold himself in readiness to defend the western frontier in case there should be war, which seemed inevitable.

General Klercker sent in reports of the Finnish armaments. Twelve thousand men were ready to confront the Russian columns, and Admiral Cronstedt had put Sveaborg* into an efficient state of defence. Most of the inhabitants of the provinces had professed themselves ready to take up arms if need were. Calmly, and in full reliance on a Higher Power, the Finns were awaiting the further development of events, convinced that a righteous cause such as theirs, and loyalty to King and country, would prove a firm support in the hour of danger, and the surest hope for a happy termination.

During the eight days the King then passed at Stockholm he was most kind and indulgent to the Queen, but take her back with him to Gripsholm he would *not*! He wanted to be quite by himself, having so much on his mind. A messenger arrived there on March 2nd with news that the Russians had advanced as far as Lovisa. It might justly have been surmised that the King would have at once returned to the capital under these

* Sveaborg a Finnish Fortress.

circumstances, but he did nothing of the sort ! On the fourteenth of the same month the Danish Minister, Count Moltke, handed to the Swedish Government a declaration of war. But the King was not tired of Gripsholm yet, and it was not until a whole fortnight later, namely, on the day he had first fixed, that Gustaf Adolf left that place and went to Haga, whither the Queen and the Royal children had preceded him.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WAR IN FINLAND

FOR hours crowds of Stockholmers might have been seen standing in front of Utter's bookshop, packed like herrings in a barrel; one would have thought they must be uncommonly fond of reading, for no matter what the weather might be, burning sun or drifting snow—more often than not the latter—the number of people in the Storkyrkobrinken was every day the same. Snow or rain, they stood there with turned-up collars under their blue or green cotton umbrellas; it almost gave one the impression that the shop was in a state of siege, and to keep up a proper semblance of order the police had to make the people stand in queue. They were all waiting for the papers! Some days it took longer than others to distribute them. In those papers the latest news from the seat of war were published, and there was much fighting and pushing to get to the front when the clerk from the bookshop, standing on the steps with his arms lifted high, dealt out sheet after sheet with such order and precision as the impatience of the crowd permitted of. All of those gathered in front of the bookshop were naturally intensely interested in hearing the very latest news which one of the Swedish noblemen, the Commander-in-Chief, Count Klingspor, never failed to send by special messenger to the King and for the public benefit. Arms enveloped in costly stuffs embroidered in gold were stretched out as eagerly for the small, closely-printed sheet, as were arms clothed in rough and coarse fustian, or even in rags, and in the *mêlée* a fishwife occasionally hustled a countess, and flung an ugly word at her, maybe, for having inadvertently trodden on her (the fishwife's) toes!

This was a rather different affair from the war in Pomerania. Now the fire was burning on our *own* hearth, it immediately concerned our *own* selves, high and low. The King had commanded a volunteer corps to be raised, which meant that every man between the age of eighteen and twenty-five, able-bodied, unmarried, and not in any Government employ, should be ready to march when required—none could tell how soon that might be; that depended upon the progress of the war.

“Here, give us a paper! Here! Here! Quick! Make haste! Don’t dawdle!—it touches us and our children!”

It was mainly about Finland, of course, but there *might* have been something from Armfelt about the army in the West, or something from Toll about Skåne.

“For God’s sake, man, give us a paper! Don’t push so, my good woman! Here! Here!”

And so Bager the grocer goes away with his paper, Asklin the silk-mercator takes his, a liveried servant of Baron Cederström’s takes one, a sooty chimney-sweep another; a stableman from Danderyd also clamoured for one, and so did the greengrocer’s boy; the schoolmaster from Carlmark, the fisherman from Roslag, and the wealthy Michelsson likewise had theirs, and so on, and so on.

Any one lucky enough to catch one of the small sheets, printed on grey rag-paper, and having paid his *obole* to the distributor, at once elbowed his way through the crowd and made for home as fast as he could to give out the news and discuss them with relatives and friends. One or another would retreat as far as the next street corner, cursorily glance over the contents of the latest bulletins, and then would kindly tell the bystanders not lucky enough to have secured a paper how matters were going on, and many of the accounts were so oddly worded that it was not given to everyone to be able to make out from them whether it was the Russians or ourselves who had been successful! Hence many heated disputes and arguments frequently arose, but in the end it was generally assumed that that splendid veteran, Count Klingspor, must, of course, have beaten the enemy, and therefore victory was undoubtedly on our side! Adlercreutz, Sandels, and Döbeln

were mentioned in despatches, and their names were pronounced with admiration and respect, though the chief interest centred on Klingspor, whose name figured first and last in all reports.

Presently a most disquieting rumour circulated through the capital that our impregnable fortress of Sveaborg had been basely betrayed to the Russians. Everyone was nearly frantic with anger and alarm, and could or would not give credence to the tale; it was conjectured that Cronstedt, probably in order to gain time, had in some way decoyed the Russians, and as, very soon afterwards, consolatory tidings of success in Eastern Finland and the recapture of Åland and Gotland reached Stockholm, it was hoped that all would yet go well, even supposing it were true that Sveaborg *had* been lost.

But how came it that the English fleet offered us no assistance whatever, either against Norway or the Russians? It had lain just outside Gothenburg since the middle of May; could there be any truth in the report that Gustaf Adolf refused to let the English forces land, because the King of England had given orders that they were not on any account to take part in the seizure of Zealand, as the King of Sweden desired, and that they had been sent simply to protect the interests of English merchants and traders at Gothenburg? It was affirmed that the English Commander, Admiral Moore, who had come to Stockholm, had daily interviews, arguments, and discussions with the King at Haga, and that he repeatedly threatened to take the entire fleet back to England at once if the King persisted in not allowing the troops to disembark. It was not likely that he should ignore the futility of relying upon the English as allies, but God forbid that he should make an open enemy of that powerful nation, which was much to be feared might be the result of his present inexplicable tactics. What would he do if no more subsidies came, and England withdrew her fleet? The report had ample time to circulate while people were waiting for news from the seat of war, in front of Utter's bookstall!

One day, early in July, the distribution of the newspapers seemed to progress a little more quickly than usual, and the crowd soon thinned to make room for newcomers,

In one part of the Riddarholm market-place, the people had gathered round a man who was reading something out aloud. He looked like a pedagogue, and had a green cap on his bald head ; his voice was very nasal as he read slowly and solemnly : "Furusund, July 1.—His Majesty, who went on board the yacht *Amadis* at Kastellholm, yesterday at ten o'clock p.m., arrived here in the best of health at 8.30 this morning, and will at once continue his journey."

"Is there nothing more, good sir ?" came from the audience.

"There is a proclamation regarding the Government : 'We, Gustaf Adolf, by the Grace of God King of Sweden and the Vends, heir-apparent of Denmark and Norway, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, etc. etc., would have all men to know that We have thought it expedient to form a new Cabinet that the affairs of the State may be wisely administered without let or hindrance during the time We intend to spend in the Finnish and Åland Archipelago, where Our Fleet is at the present time stationed. The names of those chosen to form that Cabinet are as follows :

" 'Count Carl Axel Trolle Wachtmeister, President, Chancellor of the Academy, and Knight-Commander of the Order of Gustavus Vasa.

" 'Earl-Marshal and Chancellor of the Academy, Count . . .'"

"Be so good, sir, as to look whether there is anything about the war in the paper . . . the Cabinet is not interesting."

The good man smiled and turned the paper over.

"Ah, here we have something. Listen : 'The King has received the following reports from Field-Marshal Count Klingspor, dated Head-quarters, Old Carleby, June 18th.'"

All listened in solemn silence ; as usual, it was not quite clear whether the Russians or the Swedes had had the best of it. At last, however, it dawned upon the audience that it *must* have been the Swedes, for the report concluded with these words : "When the supply of flour received from Savolax and Westerbotten for the requirements of the army shall have been exhausted, I shall with the utmost precipitancy continue the pursuit of the Russians, and follow up their retreat already commenced, for which purpose I have sent on the Advance

Guard this very day, intending to follow with the Second and Third Brigade on the morrow in order to help the good cause and the common weal as much as can be, taking into account how the enemy has devastated the land, and how frequently there is lack of food for both man and beast ; but Your Majesty graciously condescended to trust to my command fresh opportunities of proving to Your Majesty our most abject faith and loyalty, in which I humbly pray and beseech Your Majesty to believe, and whereof I beg to assure Your Majesty, praying that we may continue to enjoy the light of Your Majesty's most gracious and benign favour.—Head-quarters, Old Carleby, this eighteenth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and eight. Mauritz Klingspor, Field-Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Army. C. ADLERCREUTZ."

The audience, but little edified, were about to disperse, when they discovered that the worthy old man had found something more to read. Again there was a dead stillness, broken only by a cart or two lumbering across the market-place ; whilst they were passing the reader had to stop as no one could hear for the noise. Then he resumed in the same nasal tone as before :

" In a private communication to His Majesty, Count Klingspor had added that the magistrates, burghers, and clergy in Old Carleby had been forced to take the oaths of submission and allegiance to the Emperor of Russia, but that after its recapture by the Swedes they had moved heaven and earth to be allowed to take a fresh oath of fealty to His Majesty of Sweden, which request the Field-Marshal had granted them, and the taking of which had been duly accomplished the next day, i.e. on the nineteenth, in the parish church. The people in general had not been coerced into taking the oath to Russia."

Here the reader ceased, and slowly folded up his paper and put it into his pocket. Suddenly a voice cried : " Long life to the Field-Marshal Klingspor ; three cheers for Klingspor ! " The crowd enthusiastically took up the cheering.

The King, in his yacht *Amadis*, spent much time cruising among the small islands and watching the movements of his

fleet on the coast of Finland. Towards the end of July he crossed over to Åland, making the Royal Domain of Grälsby his head-quarters, in order to make arrangements and issue orders for the landing of his men in the southern part of Finland.

The heat on August 29th was oppressive. By a big table in a mean little chamber sat Gustaf Adolf, writing to Field-Marshal Klingspor, with whom he was very angry just now. At the precise moment when he was expecting brilliant results from the plans he had made for the landing in Finland, Klingspor seemed all at once to have lost his head, owing to the unfortunate failure of one of his expeditions, and had written to the King asking permission to leave that country and to take his men back to Sweden. The King was answering that letter now; it took him some time to think it over, for he did not wish to be too hard upon Klingspor. He took off his yellow gauntlet gloves and laid them on the table by his side; then he took up his pen, but before dipping it into the ink he carefully moved his gloves, lest a spot should fall upon them (!).

Ominous thunderclouds had gathered in the sky and made the room dark, not that it could be said to be light at any time, having only a small, low window which the King had set open on its rusty hinges before he sat down to write. The air was close and stifling, and the King breathed hard; finally he dipped his quill into the ink and wrote:

“To His Excellency Field-Marshal Count Klingspor.”

Here his pen spluttered so that he selected another from the heap lying in front of him, and began once more, muttering to himself: “I don’t want to appear too annoyed. I will order him to come here, but he shall not escape the reprimand he so richly deserves; he shall have it straight, without any beating about the bush.” Then he continued: “To-morrow I am despatching Major Björnstjerna with this letter; he will bring with him a number of Finns lately arrived, as well as some of the best-drilled Finnish Volunteers. I have once again had an opportunity, in the late encounters, of witnessing the courage and power of endurance which distinguish the Finnish

soldier, and which is inherent in that brave and estimable nation, but I fail to recognise in your letter of the 22nd the optimism and ready forethought which were, until now, some of your chief characteristics. It seems that you look upon Finland as lost to us, and only think of securing the safety of your men by sea, leaving my faithful Finns a prey to a most cruel foe ; and as their reward, you would advise a King to forsake subjects in every way so devoted to him. That were indeed requital only to be meted out to the faithless and vicious who have done the deed of traitors ; then should aliens say, Such is the reward of lying and falseness and baseness ; and traitors would say that ' Treachery ' has its value too ; the weak and timorous, ' It was well and cleverly done to set at naught the laws of honour and duty.' ”

Gustaf Adolf was aware that he was writing rather more strongly than he had intended ; he gulped down a glass of cold water which was by his side before going on again ; “ No, God forbid that I, or anyone else who has work to do in the world, should encourage the madness of vice, and by so doing appear to justify the hateful and despicable principles of those whose motto is evil, and who harbour falsehood in their hearts. It is my special wish and command that Finland be well guarded ; I have already given instructions in what manner. Therefore, no excuses must be made, no means must be neglected, for everything that can be done on my part *shall* be done to save that land and its faithful people whose blood cries to us for vengeance upon those who, in such barbarous fashion, not only forcibly deprived them of their liberty, but insulted their honour and their loyalty.”

Whilst he was writing the sky had grown darker and darker, a flash of lightning shot through the clouds, followed by a tremendous clap of thunder. The King waited until the noise had subsided, then he took up his pen again, and continued : “ The only ships I shall send you will bring troops, arms, and provisions, but they must be forwarded at once lest any Finn should forget himself and forsake his country in the hour of danger, when valour and courage are most required. Should your own health exact rest and care, you are your own master,

and at liberty to retire from an army which has striven so manfully to do its duty to lighten your responsibilities by conscientiously carrying out your orders, and which has shared with you the difficulties and hardships inseparable from war." . . .

The lightning and thunder had continued all the time the King had been writing; now it was just overhead, the deafening peals were preceded by terrific forked flashes which almost blinded him. The Duke of Enghien's dog, which had been quietly lying under the table, but panting with fear, trembled so that the very table shook. When he saw the King rise from his chair he gave a piteous howl, but dared not follow. Gustaf Adolf went to the window, which he closed, as the rain, which now fell in torrents, ran down on to the well-scrubbed floor and snowy drugget; having done this, he sat down again to finish his epistle. Then he put away his tools, sanded what he had written and once more opened the windows.

The thunderclouds which had gathered from the east were passing over the water westward; the lightning still continued, but the roar of the thunder grew fainter and fainter. Soon the sun came out again, and cool, damp, fresh air streamed in at the open casement into the close room; the King gave a deep sigh of relief.

"The storm is over," he said slowly to himself, as he put on his gloves; "for the present, at least. . . ."

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Nearly a month had elapsed since that day of storm and thunder, and during that time many things had happened, things so adverse and unexpected that the King could not keep quiet any longer in his head-quarters at Grälsby; so he stepped on board his yacht *Amadis* at Granboda and sailed away on a last expedition, having Helsingfors for its object. How had it happened that the expedition to Finland, so carefully planned by the King himself, should have been such a complete failure? He wondered whether those at the head of that ill-fated expedition had really meant it to succeed, or whether they had been cowards? Had not two of his fortresses

(Svartholm and Sveaborg) fallen into the hands of the Russians through treachery? He could never forget how it had been during the campaign in Finland in his father's time. On whom could any Sovereign rely except himself? On no one! He was exceedingly anxious at hearing no tidings of his regiment of Guards. There were several of the late King's murderers now serving in that regiment—Horn, Ribbing, and even Anckerström, and many rebellious and revolutionary scions of old noble houses, who, with their ambitious views, grudged and envied the King the power which had been his since 1772. He was one of those who would rather be without any attendants at all than be surrounded by people whom he could not wholly trust. That had been at the bottom of Armfelt's dismissal from the command of the western army. He had not been able to keep his tongue under proper control, and the King would not have his men led astray. For that reason he immediately dismissed any commanders whose expedition proved unsuccessful, and replaced them by others. When he heard that a not entirely loyal spirit was spreading amongst the Guards, he relieved them of their "guard," and entrusted that post of honour to the regiment which was at that time stationed in Åland.

And why *should* one expedition after another be doomed to fail? The ostensible and plausible reason given was that not enough men were supplied, but the King would not be convinced of that fact. He suspected that the fault lay elsewhere, and this so intensely worried and distressed him that he could not rest whilst the new expedition was on its way. That expedition was to prove to the King what sort of stuff his officers were made of—who could tell that they were not preparing another "Anjala"?* He had the same kind of feeling he had had that day in the falling darkness, when he had watched the lamps which danced this way and that across the market-place, and expected to see the traitors approach if he were not on his guard.

In order to watch with his own eyes the progress of the expedition, the King went on board his yacht and steered

* A "plot" formed against Gustavus Adolphus III.

towards the islets of Aboska. The weather was beautiful ; he had never favoured him so much when on the sea since he had gone to Russia to woo the Grand Duchess Alexandra. He recollected that journey very well, and marvelled that he should have the same kind of weather, as it was late in the season now ; he had gone to Russia on August 12th, and had embarked on board the *Amadis* this time on September 24th. The fine weather had certainly not brought him good luck *then*, what would it bring him *now* ?

He tried to prepare himself for the worst, but somehow he could not ; he had grown so light of heart since he had come out to sea. The winds, too, were as favourable as could be, and the King appeared thoroughly to enjoy sailing with the breeze. He sat in a deck-chair looking into the waves which sparkled in the sunshine ; and the wind, though soft and warm as on a summer's day, was yet strong enough to inflate the sails and send the yacht spinning along ; once within the belt of islands the trip was even more enjoyable. Gustaf Adolf felt so well, so rejuvenated both in mind and body, and as if he were only sailing for pleasure.

Thus three whole days passed most smoothly, but on the fourth the *Amadis* encountered contrary winds at the entrance of the belt of Lahmö. The gale increased so rapidly that the King gave orders for the yacht to be anchored for the night in the Sound, barely a mile from Helsing (1 Swedish mile—6.64 English). He was warned that this was anything but a safe place for passing the night, especially if circumstances should be unfavourable to the Swedish arms ; it was almost certain that the Russians were lying in ambush behind the promontory, and firing of cannon could be heard at no great distance. But the King had *said* that he would wait there until the gale had subsided. He walked up and down on deck in a very sanguine frame of mind ; his depression seemed to have completely vanished during this pleasant sail, and it had strengthened his reliance on and his trust in a Higher Power. The reports he had that morning received, on his arrival at Grönvikssund, had been the reverse of agreeable certainly, but the King would not let that trouble him ; the fresh sea-breezes had inspired him

with such wonderful confidence that all would turn out well at Helsing, and he had come out purposely to see. He had hoped that he should, that very evening, be able to hear that the disembarkation of the troops had been successfully accomplished, but owing to the gale he had to wait until the next day. He himself was somewhat astonished at his calmness and patience, for as a rule he hated waiting; but then he felt so thoroughly convinced that Boye had attained his object. It would be such a relief to him to be informed that the Guards had done their duty as behoved brave and honest Swedes, and he silently vowed that if everything on this venture went as well as he hoped it would, he would never be suspicious of his Guards again, and would reinstate them and renew to them the privilege of guarding his person! Justice and fair play must be exercised when there is no tangible proof that they are undeserved, and one should believe only that which one's own eyes have seen. But . . . what was that? . . . What was it that met the King's eyes as he stopped short in his wandering up and down and looked through his field-glasses? He could scarcely believe it! A fleet of ships in full sail was making for the *Amadis* . . . boat following upon boat . . . the report of cannon also filled the air. From his place on the deck he could see the missiles strike the water . . . they were the bullets sent by the Russians after the Swedish transports which were in the act of sailing homewards!

"That requires looking into," said the King. "I will go out in the sloop," and his voice shook so with ill-suppressed rage that his orders were scarcely intelligible, and his face was purple. He put up his hand to loosen his collar, for he felt almost choking.

Not one word did he say to either of his adjutants as he sailed forth to meet his hapless fleet; his face wore a stony, set expression, whilst the sloop, rowed by practised hands, glided along on the crests of the foaming waves of the Lahmö Sound. Suddenly he exclaimed: "Look! Look over there! What is it . . . what is it?"

But none in the sloop dared make reply.

"Where does that reflection of fire come from?" shouted

the King in a harsh voice to one of the boats that just happened to be sailing by within hail.

A gruff voice answered: "It is the village of Helsingør burning . . . the Russians set fire to it."

Gustaf Adolf had risen; he stood with arms uplifted and commanded: "Stop! let down the anchor—signal to the other ships to do the same. Is Colonel Boye on board there? . . . That is well. Let him report himself on board the *Amadis* immediately; row back to the yacht."

He sat down, and was quickly rowed back to the *Amadis*, where he at once retired to his cabin.

It was not long before Boye and his officers were on board.

"Has he said anything?" whispered Boye to Wettenstedt on his way down to the King's cabin.

"He only remarked that, as a rule, he did not approve of retreats, but he said it in an *awful* tone."

Up on deck the officers of the fleet were explaining and defending their mode of action to the gentlemen of the King's suite.

"We fought desperately, but the Russians outnumbered us; but we were all brave, *brave*, BRAVE. God help him who would dare to say otherwise!"

One by one the ships had anchored round the King's yacht. Calls and shouting were heard everywhere.

"What have you done with the troops? Is it true that you took to the ships and left your comrades in the hands of the Russians?"

"You should have seen the King's face when he saw you coming; it boded no good, you may be sure."

The rain and wind increased, and darkness was falling fast. The next day, however, dawned with beautiful sunshine and a dead calm, so much so, indeed, that neither the transports nor any gunboat from the *Amadis* could sail at all. The King had not been seen on deck the whole day, but about six o'clock in the evening he came up. He looked ill, his eyes were burning, and his cheeks crimson with fever; he walked restlessly to and fro in silence.

All at once he stopped short, and beckoned to one of his adjutants to come to him; he addressed him excitedly.

What was going to happen next ? Surely it *could* not be *possible* ! Had Gustaf Adolf suddenly been bereft of his senses ? Was he intending to go on land ? A pleasure trip to that dangerous headland, forsooth, with five or six of his gentlemen for company ? Would nobody venture to represent to him that at any moment he might be captured by the Russians. If there were but *one* Russian lurking in the copse yonder—it would be enough, and there might be more who might waylay the strollers and take them prisoners.

He could not seriously intend to take a pleasure excursion on land just now ? But with him everything most incredible was *bound* to be true ! The sloop was got ready, and the King came down the accommodation ladder and took his place in the bow. If that piece of foolhardiness ended well, it might truly be said that there is a special Providence that watches over fools ! Perhaps he was anxious to give the Russians an opportunity of sending a bullet through him ; could he have been so entirely unnerved and upset by that insignificant retreat of the fleet, when he had taken the loss of Sveaborg comparatively lightly ?

Oh, it was strange, strange and incomprehensible indeed !

The King himself steered towards the well-wooded headland, and ere long the boat was drawn up between the rocks on the shore ; he had maintained a stolid silence on the way, but was the first to set foot on land, and, turning to his suite, he exclaimed : “ What a beautiful evening, gentlemen ! ”

“ Beautiful, indeed,” replied some of them, casting apprehensive looks around meanwhile.

“ Hark ! Was there not something moving over there among the bushes ? What was that rustling ? Only a blackcock disturbed, rising on the wing. Ah, if we only had our guns ! How can one kill a bird with naught but a sword ?—and a blackcock, too ! Don’t laugh so loud, or His Majesty might hear—sh ! A sword is well enough for a Russian, but who thinks about the Russians now ? ”

“ The King certainly does not seem to or we shouldn’t be here. Who can tell where *his* thoughts are ! ”

Gustaf Adolf, however, gave a searching look all round

before he climbed the highest point, whence a most exquisite view of land and sea could be obtained. The sun was blood-red as it set, and the dark bed of clouds on which it rested for a few minutes like a ball of fire was edged with gold ; slowly it sank, casting a curious light on the dark outlines of the woods.

“What a grand and solemn sunset !” remarked the King, clasping his hands. “Now it is quite hidden in the clouds—not a ray remains. Let us see whether it will break through again. We shall have to be patient and bide our time ; who can tell what may happen, and whether the sun will not soon show his face again ? Don’t look away, gentlemen, watch the sun ; curiously enough, the cloud which obscures it just now is the only cloud visible in the firmament. Odd ! but then *everything* is odd !”

The gentlemen exchanged glances ; truly everything *was* odd, but oddest of all that they should be required to calmly watch the setting of the sun in such a place and at such a time ! Odd, too, that the King should keep on talking, and that the man who only that morning had been almost beside himself with grief, and had not spoken for hours on end, should now apparently concentrate his mind on the beauties of nature ! He continued talking with nervous haste, as though the subject were all absorbing, and no other idea must be allowed to intrude.

“If it please God, we will remain up here until the sun has quite gone down, then we will return to the beach and watch the effects of the moon on the water. I have never enjoyed such a glorious sunset before. One can’t help wondering whether it has really disappeared, or whether it will come forth again from under the cloud ; it is a most exciting moment—I do so want to see the sun just once more.”

When the King ceased talking everything around was so still that the swish of the waves over the pebbles at the foot of the rock was plainly audible ; he kept his eyes fixed on the clouds, but his gentlemen cast anxious looks towards a thick clump of trees on the right.

“What are you looking at ?” asked the King sharply. “Look at the sun ; it is well worth watching. Look, look !”



A DANGEROUS HEADLAND

he cried excitedly, "how it is breaking forth from the clouds ! Thanks and praise be to God ! "

For a few brief minutes the dazzling fiery globe again became visible, then it sank slowly into the sea.

"One would think the waves would boil and splutter when the sun sinks into them like a ball of fire," remarked Gustaf Adolf, without taking his eyes off the scene.

"Yes, Your Majesty, they *do*," assented an irritable voice behind him.

As the last faint glow disappeared the King turned away with tears in his eyes.

"I would not have missed this sight for all the world," he said. "But let us go down to the beach now—no, not to the boat, but to a certain spot I noticed as we came along."

"Would it not be well, Your Majesty, to row back to the *Amadis* ? It is getting dark, and the environs are anything but safe."

"We shall go down to the beach, as I said," replied the King sternly ; "it is very peaceful down there, and the full moon gives light enough all round. Just notice it shining through the trees there—was ever such a beauteous moon seen before ? And look how near the stars seem ; I think I never saw them so large and so near before, and they seem so loosely set in the sky that one would not be surprised if some of them were to fall down on us at any moment."

Ugh ! There was nothing to be done but to follow the King as he climbed down the slope ; then he seated himself on a big boulder close to the water's edge, and gazed intently at the waves rippling over the pebbles. In the distance a broad band of silver lay across the sea.

The King and his suite had been away from the yacht for more than two hours when at last, about nine o'clock, he consented to return. The crew counted the men in the sloop as they saw it approaching ; yes, they were all there, and the King manipulated the rudder as before ; the light of the moon gave a ghastly hue to his countenance, and when he came up the accommodation ladder and slowly walked along the deck to his own quarters he looked solemn and depressed.

"Still in the same vile temper?" asked Colonel Boye, as he met the Commander.

"Oh, yes; from the time we left terra firma out yonder and took to the water—not a word since he stepped into the boat; and up there he never held his tongue for a second. He raved about the sun, moon, and stars—*islands, bays, and harbours—land and water—and sang a sort of Te Deum over the sunset.* He was quite up in the clouds, saw visions, and prophesied. But now he is as he was before, if his temper is not even worse. I wonder what he expected over there—evidently something he did not get."

"I should think a Russian bullet was about all he *could* reasonably expect."

"Maybe that was what he was waiting for. But if he is really so courageous and daring, why doesn't he put himself at the head of his men and go to fight the Russians, and if, as people *do* say, he is such a coward and poltroon, what on earth could induce him to take that trip to-day? Ah, well; we must put up with enigmas and surprises; at any rate, we are to go back to Åland to-morrow, no matter what the weather may be; head-quarters are to be in the glebe at Lamland, and the King is going to inhabit the Presbitery, a ramshackle old hovel, with but three rooms such as they are, and built in an isolated nook on the island. We shall see what the next freak will be!"

Now the King had seen with his own eyes, and he was fully convinced that he understood what he *had* seen. In the miserable little dwelling in which he had elected to instal himself at Lamland an anonymous epistle from Finland reached him referring to the disastrous expedition to Helsingé. Much blame was cast upon the dastardly behaviour of the troops, and shameful allegations were made against their leaders. It was hinted that the latter had come to a secret understanding with the Russian officers some considerable time before.

As he perused the document he could not help exclaiming: "Anjala! Anjala!"*

* See p. 383.

He covered his face with his hands ; he *would* not see what lay in front of him. With the indelible vision of the late King's ignominious return from the Finnish campaign to Ulriksdal constantly in his mind, he could not help comparing the vision he had so lately had, viz. the Swedish fleet in full sail, coming to meet him in the Sound of Lahmö !

" Anyhow, it will not be a regiment of ' Guards ' that shall repeat the story of ' Anjala, ' " he hissed between his set teeth. Laying ready a sheet of paper on his writing table, examining several quills and choosing the hardest, with a firm, steady hand, and large, bold characters, he covered the pages of the thick yellow paper.

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The Guards had been degraded. For the officers of the highest aristocracy attached to that regiment it meant undeserved dishonour. The King had degraded and disgraced those who had fought the enemy desperately and to the utmost of their power, both at Wiaas and at Helsingø ; and what impression would that make on those who had not been on active service, and yet had to share in the humiliation and ignominy ? No wonder that they were incensed.

They could or would not believe that the incident of the 28th of September could have started the idea of disbanding the regiment, though it might have contributed to that end ; had not General Boye, in a communication to the King, couched in the most deferential language, fully explained and justified their conduct at both places, though his letter seemed not to have had the least influence over this presumably pre-concerted plan. Yes, the disgrace touched even those who had been remote from the seat of war ; would such action have been taken if the King had only been displeased with those who had been *in* the engagement of September 28th ?

The Guards degraded ! For the officers of the Life Guards, the Swedish and Finnish Guard, it meant exposure to universal contempt, to the ridicule and sarcasm of the rest of the army, the jests and jeers, laughter and sorry wit of their comrades, territorials and raw recruits upon whom they had been wont

to look down with somewhat of scorn from their superior height.

Now *they* were put lower than the lowest, and would be known simply as "Fleetwood's Regiment" or "Pahlen's Boys," after their Colonel. How the people would gape and stare to see them arrive at Stockholm without their distinguishing badges—with yellow plumes instead of white in their hats, and they, as now merely of the rank and file, must exchange their beautiful white flag for the common yellow one, and sacrifice the clasp in their caps. Was there ever such an infamous disgrace?

No such degradation had ever been inflicted on any regiment composed of men of the highest rank in the land, who had neither turned their backs to the enemy nor cast away their guns. The Guards who were quartered on the island of Åland demanded a fair hearing, which was denied them. They were not allowed to say anything in self-defence; the hearing was refused them, the circumstances, the King said, having been more than sufficiently threshed out already. It was well known that it had been reported to him, on oath, that on the night before the lamentable affair at Wiais, officers of the Guards had been seen to drink with Russian officers; but why had he not been told that that tale originated with an ignorant peasant from the country, who had seen Baron Fleetwood giving milk and brandy to a number of wounded Russians who were that night transported to a barn where, through the kindness of Fleetwood and Colonel Lagerbring, they received such care and attention as could be managed? And why would the King not believe it when he *was* told? Why did he turn a deaf ear and pile misfortune upon his Guards, depriving them of what was dearer to them than life . . . honour?

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Sergeant Blå (pr. Blow) of the former regiment of Finnish Guards, requested his Chief to grant him two days' leave of absence. It was readily done, without questions being asked; the Chief knew that it must be for some good and laudable purpose, and he relied upon his companions, who had

advised him not to refuse Sergeant Blå leave when he asked for it.

The indignation among the erstwhile Finnish Guards had been tremendous, but no one had been more irate with His Majesty than the man Blå; he had always been known as a very irritable, hot-tempered individual, and no one was astonished to see how angry and indignant he had been at the affront offered to his regiment.

Sergeant Blå, then, had got his two days' leave, and on the first day he went over to Lamland where, in a small peasant hut, he changed his uniform for an Åland peasant dress, which he had brought with him in a bundle; there he also loaded his rifle, slung it across his shoulder, and then with long, quick strides, walked into the woods which lay around Lamland's glebe.

It was a cold, blowy day in October, and the ragged peasant-dress which Blå had donned was a much more imperfect protection against the chill autumn blasts than his uniform would have been, and Blå, who was very tall and thin, shivered miserably the whole day as he walked about the woods waiting for the quarry which never showed itself. Darkness began to fall, storm clouds chased each other across the sky, and neither moon nor stars were visible. Blå meant to leave the woods now, but as it was pitch dark he had to light the lantern he had brought with him. In spite of that he often missed his way; occasionally he stopped to listen to various sounds, and when, after a short lull, the storm again shrieked and roared through the wood, he shook with fear. He stood still until the wind abated a little, then he resumed his walk, shivering with cold; he had to stop to get his breath, then he took out his flask and took a draught of brandy which gave him both warmth and courage. Sergeant Blå uttered a foul oath as he proceeded on his way down to the Presbitery, struggling against the wind.

"As sure as I am an honest man I will shoot the curséd hound that is hiding in the Presbitery down yonder," he said aloud; but suddenly he got a fright, lest he should have been overheard, and stopped to listen whether anyone were at his heels to punish him, but the whistling and buffeting of the storm

prevented his standing still for long. He got on to the path again, and presently perceived a glimmer of light through the trees in the distance ; it came from a horn lantern hanging up on the door of the farm dairy ; he could not take his eyes off it. " I shall have to pass that and go round the corner—once round the corner and—there I *am*."

But somehow he did not seem able to move ; he stood on the same spot, shivering and shaking ; not long since he had felt the hot, feverish blood coursing through his veins. Now he trembled as if he had nothing on, and as if an icy pair of giant hands were gripping him by the shoulders.

" They might have done it themselves," muttered Blå through his chattering teeth ; " it's a job for a gentleman, not for the likes of me. It was a captain of the Guards popped off the last one, and one of the lieutenants of the Finnish Guards might have undertaken this one, instead of sending me. Well, no—I won't say either that Gripenwald or any of the rest *did* really *send* me ; he has degraded us, and I am here of my own free will to—shoot the dog."

In great haste he stole past the door of the dairy where the lantern hung ; turned the corner, and found himself at the back of a small building painted red. A light was burning in an attic, and many more on the ground floor in the middle room behind the bit of blue cloth hung over each window by way of a blind. This room was only about three feet from the road. Save for the steady tramp of a sentry in the entrance and the continued sough of the wind, all was silent. Men from the Kronoberg regiment were appointed to keep guard over the King's person at his head-quarters at Lamland, but no one was posted at the back of the house, the King having commanded that watch should only be kept in the front. In the intervals of the howling of the wind, Blå, standing quite close to the sitting-room window, could hear the sentinel's measured tread ; he could also see shadows moving about in the well-lit room, though not very distinctly. Presently a figure taller than the rest appeared. Could that be *He*?—or it might be the other one over there ; it could not be the third, because he was too small and insignificant. In a few minutes a tall

shadow, with head held erect and sharply cut profile advanced towards the window ; it stopped immediately in front of the curtains and stretched out its hand towards those in the room with a gesture of command.

"That's him ! It can't be anyone *but* him ! You can't mistake that shadow ! It's the King—it is the King !"

Blå stood with his hand on the trigger and lifted his rifle to take aim at the motionless shadow ; it took him some time, and just at the moment he was going to fire a cuckoo-clock inside suddenly began to strike the hour. The shrill and totally unexpected sound made Blå start and his hand shake ; as long as that clock kept on striking it was simply impossible to fire, but—the last stroke should mark the King's last hour—then Blå would pull the trigger. But with the last stroke of ten the shadow had disappeared. However, Blå knew what he would do.

The next window belonged to the room the King used as his sleeping apartment, and thither he had retired on the stroke of ten. His aide-de-camp had said that Gustaf Adolf frequently sat up, studying the Book of Revelation, to a late hour. The room was very small, and consequently the bed stood close to the window, and when the candles were lit the shadow could be seen sitting by the bed ; there the King liked to be alone.

But there was neither lustre nor candelabra in that room, only a faint streak of light was visible between the curtains. Blå knew that that little ray proceeded from the nightlight which the King kept burning throughout the hours of darkness ; but it gave such a feeble glimmer that it cast no shadow. Now was *He* really there or was he *not*? Presumably, if he wanted to read he would require more light, and by a curious coincidence at that very moment a number of candles *were* all at once lighted in that room.

Blå could now clearly distinguish the King sitting by the bed with a large volume on his knees. . . . Now he had only to wait till that other shadow—the one which had lighted the candles—should have disappeared ; it would not be long.

Now, then !—the moment had come !

Blå lifted his rifle—the shadow within sat motionless, the book still on his knees.

It was the Bible the King was reading, as Blå knew he always did before retiring to rest ; but it certainly made a difference, seeing it with his own eyes. That shadow with the well-known, haughty profile represented the King of Sweden—to whom the people were wont to sing : “ God save the King ! God save the King ! ”

Blå put down his rifle and wiped the sweat from his brow.

“ I can’t shoot him down like a dog as long as he sits there with his Bible in his hand ; I can’t do it.”

A long blast rushed through the wood with a sound of wailing and moaning ; the shadow in the room never moved, but sat bent over the sacred pages ; and Sergeant Blå, who had but now wiped the heat drops from his brow, stood at this moment chilled to the bones. Once more he lifted his rifle, but he could not hold it steady enough to venture to pull the trigger, so he let it slip from his benumbed hands ; had he been heard by someone inside ?

An indescribable terror seized the man who had come to murder his King—him who sat so still poring over his book !

Meanwhile the tempest had increased—it fell like the roar of a gigantic waterfall on the ear of the would-be regicide. He must get away—not another instant did he dare to remain near the window and gaze at that shadow—it would drive him mad. He stooped to pick up his rifle, but had scarcely strength left to carry it ; with faltering steps, and as noiselessly as he could, Sergeant Blå fled back to the wood whence he had come.

On the morrow, early in the morning, a man in the ragged attire of a peasant was found in a dying condition in the wood. He was still conscious enough to be able to tell who he was, and that he had caught a chill on that bitter, boisterous night in the forest where he had lain down. He complained of a pain in his chest, and at times felt as if he were lying in a burning hot oven and then plunged into icy cold water. . . .

CHAPTER XXVIII

ACROSS THE STYX

NOTHING could be thought or talked of in Stockholm just then, but the return of the militia with the gunboats, late autumn having put a stop to their manœuvring. Certain suspicious rumours had obtained anent these vessels; it was said that among the men an epidemic not unlike the plague in character was raging on those open boats, which were being slowly rowed or towed up the Strömmen amidst drifting snow and torrential rain. To on-lookers on the bank, watching one after another of these craft come up and lie to, they seemed to bear a close resemblance to the ferry-boat of Charon, which conveyed shadowy and ghastly looking passengers to the lower regions, so weird and uncanny were the forms, of which an occasional glimpse could be caught, and the attenuated figures which lay in deathlike stillness at the bottom of these boats. Why could not these poor wretches be allowed to be put on shore instead of being condemned to lie day and night in open boats exposed to the cold and wet, which saturated their scanty clothing to such a degree that on some of those freezing nights in November some had been actually found frozen to the planks on which they had been lying! No proper outfit or equipment had been provided for these wretched youths when they had been called out. How many of these poor, indigent fellows, who had left their homes as stout, sturdy lads that spring "for the King," had been put on the gunboats with nothing more than what they stood up in, viz. coarse homespun linen jackets and cotton trousers, without shoes or stockings, or even a warm wrap to protect their shoulders; nor had they been properly fed when battling

against gales and choppy seas, or when rowing hard on board these damnable boats ; and now, when they were returning sick, dying, at best wrecks of their former selves, no measures were taken to shelter them or to assuage their sufferings, and no quarters were provided, either for the sick or the robust. It was a sin and a shame to see how thousands of them were perishing in our very midst from sheer neglect. Most of them had never even beheld the foe against whom they had been sent to fight ; worse foes had vanquished *them*—cold, heat, sickness, and lack of common care. By command the Opera House in the Gustaf Adolf's market square was turned into a temporary hospital, so that at last the sick could be landed ; but can one imagine a field-hospital stricken with plague set up right in the centre of the city ! It showed kindly forethought and consideration for its honest, quiet, and law-abiding inhabitants, truly !!!

Good God ! What a terrible, heartrending sight was that disembarking !

Tottering men carried a stretcher from one of the boats along the landing-stage ; the human burden lying thereon, thin and emaciated, would, one would have thought, have been light enough for a couple of children to carry, but the four men who bore it stumbled and panted, and having at length safely got it ashore, sank down faint and exhausted by its side ; stretcher after stretcher was thus borne across, until the entire square was encumbered with the dying and their drooping bearers. Here and there a gaunt figure might be seen blindly stumbling townwards with frozen cheeks ; another lame and deformed from the sickness fell dying in the market-place, and many of those discharged, pale, haggard, and gruesome to look upon, wandered aimlessly about the streets and alleys. Beautiful Stockholm was turned into a horrible, loathsome charnel house !

Which of these human skeletons or its bearers could be identified as a son, a friend, or a brother ? In the prematurely aged feeble individuals in rags, clinging to the railings of houses, it would be difficult to recognise the hardy, healthy lads of yore, who had gone forth bravely to fight “ for King and

country." They never complained, neither did they care to speak, and it was impossible to get the sight of them out of one's mind—not only for days, but for weeks, nay, months. Crossing the market-place, weird and ghastly forms stared at one from the windows of the building which erstwhile had been the palace of pleasure and the home of laughter and mirth. On the passage over the bridge one was met by the mournful hearse, a noisy, rattling vehicle, covered with red canvas, on its never-ending journeys to and fro.

At one's own gates one stumbled over soldiers who had prayed to be taken in at many a door, but who had been harshly turned away for fear of the contagion ; out of pity and a feeling of humanity, a few were taken in, but hardly had they been supplied with food and drink than the dreadful scourge was on them and they fell, deadly sick. The unaccustomed warmth and nourishment seemed more than their enfeebled frames could stand ! And there were flying rumours of even greater and more appalling horrors than these—of men, *apparently* dead, being buried alive in the cemetery of Skantull—and worse. . . .

Evil reports had preceded the arrival of the gunboats, and evil reports followed their departure when no longer anchored in the Strömmen ; reports of dead bodies being found under seats when the boats were being overhauled and cleaned at last—bodies of men who had not even been missed.

These happenings naturally formed the chief topic of conversation ; it was universally suspected that this misery so openly brought before the public, and other misfortunes, so inopportunately disclosed, were calculated to increase public dissatisfaction, and that the sinister but, alas ! often true reports had been started and circulated by those whose interest it was to foment public discontent. We, Stockholmers, were well aware that this *was* the object of certain sections of society ; the blame for every adverse stroke of fortune was straightway laid upon the King, and what *could* have been more odious than the treatment which had been meted out to the militia ? With what grief and sorrow, too, would those who did not belong to Stockholm proper be received when they returned

to their poverty-stricken homes in different parts of the country? The poor parents would say : " Our boy has been injured for life ; he will never be strong or well enough again to work " ; or, " Our son is a cripple now, his foot had to be taken off at Stockholm because it was frozen " ; or again, " Our boy was frozen to death in the boats last night."

And *whose* fault was it ?

They had left their homes at the King's command, but no one had looked after them ; their leaders had been superannuated men, no longer fit for anything, who had left the service years before, or else they had been young fellows of their own age, untried and inexperienced like themselves. The Ministry of War and certain military officials had been accused of bribery and corruption when the militia were sent out ; but should not the King himself have inquired into these matters and looked after the welfare of our young men ?

Could there be any truth in the rumour that he was supposed to have said that none would attain everlasting salvation save those who lost their lives in this campaign ? And how, then, about those who lost them through neglect, starvation, and cold ? . . .

" We poor, ignorant labouring men," said the peasants, " would not think of calling our Sovereign to account for other matters beyond our comprehension ; we do not know when we shall be free from the enormous war-taxes he has sanctioned to be put upon us, nor when it will please him to make peace, or to call a meeting of Parliament, from which we have so much to hope. We only know that he is a just and God-fearing man whom we always loved, and under whose sceptre we were proud to live. But, with all due respect, we would fain ask him *why* he took no thought for the lads we sent to defend our King and country ? "

CHAPTER XXIX

AT HAGA

THE Royal Family had been at Haga the whole winter—that is, ever since the King's return from Åland, and he had gone to the capital every morning to transact business, returning to Haga about two o'clock in the afternoon ; unless it were strictly necessary, he never spent a night at Stockholm. But the Queen was confined to Haga through illness ; she could neither walk nor drive. Most of her time was spent on the sofa in the red drawing-room, and, when the King was there, she had herself carried into the dining-room for meals.

That day till about half-past two, the hour for the King's return, she had been lying wondering how it had fared with him in town ; it was always a great effort for him to go, but he never shirked it. The Queen knew that the discussions in the Council Chamber always turned upon finance, the various matters before the Riksdag, and upon the subject of peace ; she was also but too well aware that her Consort's opinions were *always* at variance with those of others, that he always found some imaginary difficulty in the way, and was altogether a pessimist.

Usually that was the only topic of conversation between her and the King at Haga ; she dare not ask any questions, for he had strictly forbidden her to meddle with matters she did not understand, but from the sort of temper he was in when he returned she could pretty well guess whether things had gone to his satisfaction or not, and what opposition or provocation he had met with. One day, in bitterness of spirit, he had told her that the Chancellor of the Empire had said

that the new war-tax could not be put on, and that he had answered : " Then I shall lay upon all of you, gentlemen, the responsibility of whatever may happen, as you refuse me the means needed for the defence of the country."

Ah, yes, what *would* happen and what *might* happen ?

The Queen was much distressed thinking about the war with Russia which would be sure to break out afresh in the early spring, if not now ; she was also greatly exercised in her mind about the Danish hostilities. She grieved to think that her own husband and her sister Elisabeth's should go to war against each other, and that it was almost a certainty that the Emperor Alexander would come off victorious, though that was not the King's opinion by any means ; he was quite positive that victory would be on *his* side ; the Queen had her doubts.

She knew that the hard winter which bound the waters fast in ice would prove a real danger ; she trembled at the prospect of the Russians coming to Stockholm across the ice.

One afternoon, in the early part of the year 1809, Queen Frederica lay on her couch pondering many things about which she would have liked to ask the King, had she dared. She found time hang heavy on her hands, as she was unable either to play the piano or attend to her painting ; she had just finished a letter to her mother, and her writing materials still lay on a small inlaid table by her side. As she laid down her pen an idea suddenly came into her mind : " What would my brother-in-law be likely to do with the King, myself, and our children, supposing he *did* take Stockholm ? He would probably very deferentially kiss my hand, look at me with his big, dreamy eyes, and pay me the most outrageous compliments—and then—send me off to prison ! As for the King . . . the Emperor would, a few days prior to his occupation of our capital, send a message by Count Stedingk, saying that he (Alexander) was one of the King's most ardent admirers, and that he was genuinely grieved to have had to go to war with him. He had sent the same sort of message just before he invaded Finland without any warning. At the remembrance Queen Frederica's pretty upper lip curled disdainfully.

"Poor Elisabeth! I think, after all, I would rather have my perpetually growling old bear for a husband than your cunning, smug, and sly fox. I should not care to exchange husbands with you, for all the world his being reputed the greatest gallant in Europe, who, no doubt, says the sweetest things to you, my dear Elisabeth; but, mind you, not to you *only*, he would say the same to any other pretty woman, Queen or beggar-maid. Now, *my* husband never says a pleasant word to me, but a good many *unpleasant* ones! And there *you* are, my poor Elisabeth, adoring a man who cares not one rap for *you*."

Queen Frederica heaved a sigh of genuine commiseration. She was rather at loose ends just now; she had told her ladies that she did not require their presence, and, having given them a few hours' *cong  *, she did not like to call them back. The Crown-Prince was at his studies with his tutor, Biberg; the two Princesses, Sophia and Amelia, at lessons with their governess, and the baby Princess Cecilia having her afternoon sleep. In the afternoon the Queen generally had plenty to occupy her; then the King would sit in her room, signing various documents, and it was her business to strew the golden sand (blotting-paper had not as yet been invented) on the signature, and lay the papers in order; but just now she had nothing to do. She took up a silver hand-glass from her dressing-case, arranged her curls, and smoothed certain folds in her white morning-gown, bordered with swansdown; then she idly twisted the long fringe of the light-blue silk scarf which hung over her shoulders; when she was tired of that she *untwisted* it again! Then she looked at the little watch, richly set with diamonds on a rope of pearls round her neck, and said to herself: "Thank goodness, in three-quarters of an hour the King may be back; it has been a dreadfully long morning!"

The weather was bitterly cold, the snow had frozen hard, and green-and-gold sleighs were gliding to and fro on the Brunn's Bay. From the couch on which she lay the Queen could see the pretty sleighs, the fiery steeds, and the white snow-nets, and the crowds on the ice. The King would not come that way, he always drove direct over the Drottninggatan and Norr-

tullgatan. If only he would come soon ! . . . still half an hour !

There was a rustling at the dining-room door ; the Queen turned her head. A lackey stood respectfully waiting until it should please her to look in his direction. " What is it ? " said the Queen, half-rising on her sofa.

“ An old woman from the country beseeches Your Majesty to see her. She will *not* go away ; she persists in saying that she has a most important communication to make to Your Majesty.”

The Queen was not long in guessing the nature of that communication, and she was always much more affable towards her inferiors than towards her equals, which was one reason no one had attempted to drive the old lady away.

“ Who is she ? Do I know her ? ”

“ She does not say that she is known to Your Majesty, only that she has an important message. She is a very, very old woman.”

“ Let her be brought in then.”

The Queen half sat up on her couch, resting her elbow on its silken cushion ; she looked very fascinating, the slightly melancholy expression, which was one of her great charms, had been accentuated by her recent illness, and her gentle blue eyes were fixed upon the door.

An aged crone, in a close cap, a jacket and well-worn coarse skirt, and leaning on a gnarled stick, entered the Red Room ; the Queen could see that in the far-off days of her youth this woman must have been good indeed to look upon ; she still had bright brown eyes and regular, clear-cut features, although her skin was brown with age and hard work, and her face scored with countless wrinkles ; her gait was uncertain and feeble.

“ Come a little nearer, mother,” the Queen said in her sweetest voice and worst Swedish. “ What do you want to say to me ? ”

The old woman hobbled painfully towards the couch. She bent low to kiss the hem of the Queen's garment, and was about to drop on her knees, but she prevented her.

"No, little mother, don't kneel," she said. "I don't like old people to kneel, it makes bad legs worse. What do you wish to say to me?"

The old lady looked cautiously round the chamber.

"We are quite by ourselves," said the Queen encouragingly, with the least little touch of impatience in her tone. "Well, what is it?"

The old dame made a sign to her to lean forward, then she whispered almost into the Queen's ear:

"Oh, Lady Sovereign! The King is about to be betrayed; he is to be carried off and everything is to be taken from him. I, a poor old woman, have found it out. I can't say *how*, but I hurried hither to beseech you to warn him."

The beautiful rosy blush vanished from the Queen's cheeks; she grasped the old woman's arm and drew her nearer to her side. "I don't think I quite heard all you said; say it over again." And in the same hurried and excited manner as before, the old crone repeated her words as distinctly as her toothless gums would allow: "Lady Queen! the King is about to be betrayed, carried off, and everything is to be taken from him."

"Who is going to betray the King? He has made no enemies—he cannot have any, because he is much too good and too just."

"I may not say from whom I had it, but I was obliged to come here to warn you and to pray you to beg the King to take great care on his journeys to and from the city."

"Good God! Something must have happened to him already!" and the Queen convulsively seized her little silver bell, which she rang so violently that her waiting maid rushed in through one door and a lackey through the other.

"Has anything happened to the King?" she cried; "Where is he?"

"His Majesty is at this moment stepping out of his sleigh," replied the lackey.

Then, with lips still quivering with fear, the Queen said: "You can go now, good mother." Then she added, in German, to her maid. "She seems a little queer in the head; let food and a little money be given her, and then let her be sent away."

The old dame, however, did not stir. The Queen waved her hand, rather impatiently, and said to her in Swedish again : " You may go now ; the King is just coming ; you meant well, no doubt, but you are quite mistaken."

" I told you but the truth. . . . REMEMBER THAT ! "

" Yes, yes ; but go now ; by that door over there, the King may come in at any moment."

The door had scarcely closed on the old woman when the King really *did* enter. He went up to the Queen, and wished her good evening ; then he took a seat on the edge of the sofa by her side. She held his icy hand in hers and tried to warm it against her hot cheek, stroking it and covering it with kisses.

He drew it away, and looked at her with unfeigned surprise.

" What is the matter ? What are these tears for ? " he asked. And as the Queen did not immediately reply, he waxed wrath, and said sternly : " What has happened ? Answer me ! Are you ill, or has anything happened to the Crown-Prince or the Princesses ? "

" Nothing has happened, only I was frightened just now."

" Who has dared to frighten you ? "

" An old woman was here, and she told me such dreadful things."

" What kind of dreadful things ? Where is she ? She must be punished. Who *dared* to bring her in here ? " cried the King, angrily, rising.

" No, no ; do not let anything be done to her ; she meant well ; but I think she was getting childish."

" What did she say then ? "

" She bade me warn you ; she said you were about to be betrayed, carried off, dethroned," said the Queen, whimpering, throwing her arms round the King's neck and drawing him down to her.

" Aha ! that is the second old dame who has come on the same errand this year. How can such nonsense frighten you ? Can't you see that people try all sorts of things in order to enlist your interest and sympathy ? What reward did the old crone want for her information ? "

"None at all; but I did not ask her, I was too frightened. But—oh, Your Majesty, I do beseech you to be careful; do not expose yourself wilfully to danger on your way to and from Stockholm, that was what she dwelt upon most."

"I don't think I am a young 'belle' whom anybody would dream of kidnapping in broad daylight, so don't think of it, and try to be calm. Do you not believe I can trust myself to Swedish patriotism and Swedish loyalty? They know that I mete out punishment to treachery and cowardice. The nation loves its King, and when in dire straits, through no fault of his own, they would shed their last drop of blood on his behalf willingly. A Sovereign has no enemies when the people are convinced that he has right on his side, and they *do* know how falsely the Emperor of Russia has acted towards me. Is that not so?"

"Oh, yes, yes; if ever there *was* a monarch who deserved to have no foes among his people, *you* certainly are *the* one; but everywhere there are some who are ungrateful, or who are led astray. I used sometimes to think that you saw too much evil in people and things, and now I fear that your rose-coloured spectacles make you see only perfection in your Swedish folk. Ah, me! If there should be any truth in what the old lady said . . . ! No, don't be angry with me!"

The King had risen and was going to the door.

"If you worry yourself and me any more with repeating that rubbish, I tell you the old witch shall be made to rue it."

"Well, I won't say any more about it . . . only Your Majesty must not let her be punished."

"You must dismiss her from your thoughts also."

The Queen shook her head.

"Yes, I mean you must not think of it . . . tell me, now, what you did in town to-day."

"Things were tiresome and contrary as usual. I was all the time longing to be back here—but then, that is nothing new," said the King. "I am terribly tired and weary, so I will go to my room and rest awhile."

"Don't—oh, don't leave me," whispered the Queen; "I am so nervous when you are not near me . . . no, it is not

that I am thinking of anything particular, but oh, do stay with me. You can rest here ; I will put a cushion under your head . . . there, put your head down on it, so. I am sleepy too ; we shall see which of us two will doze off first."

The King did as she wished, and when, after a while, she opened her eyes she saw that his head had sunk on the pillow ; by the deep, regular breathing she could tell he was fast asleep ; she dare not move for fear of waking him—he so much needed rest . . . rest from all his troubles and difficulties—and he was *so* weary !

So she lay still, looking down on his pale face, the lines on his forehead and the premature wrinkles were obliterated in sleep, and his expression was kind and gentle in the blessed oblivion of slumber. . . . He had so little peace—so little rest. " If the country were at peace, *he* would be, but that would never happen. Only a few days ago he said that a king who endeavours to rule according to the will of God in this world will be a king in the next world also, and that he would never sacrifice his heavenly kingdom for his earthly one ; and as I know so well what *he* takes to be the ' Will of God,' I also know full well that never, never more shall we have peace in the land . . . never, never more will he have peace in his heart ! "

Just then the King moved uneasily, groaned, and woke. . . .

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A month later, February 18th, the King was driving as usual from Stockholm to Haga ; the Gentleman-in-Attendance sat by his side and held the ribbons, looking straight ahead, as it was etiquette to do when not addressed by the King, and the latter had not spoken during the whole drive, having had enough to do to acknowledge the greetings of the people on the way ; in the Fredsgatan they halted for a few minutes. His Majesty suddenly remembered that he had forgotten a certain document in the Palace which he would want in the afternoon at Haga. He made the footman get down, and sent him back to fetch it. At the bottom of the hill the King stopped again, and sent his escort up to General Tibell with a message, after which they proceeded up the steep incline.

Twice had his Equerry opened his lips to try to dissuade the King from parting with his only protectors, i.e. first his servant, and now his mounted escort; solitary, the postilions hardly counted, being fully taken up with attending to their horses. But the General (Löwenhaupt) had closed them again and kept silent. He called to mind the promise he had given Colonel Skjöldebrand that he would offer no opposition, but depart in silence if, whilst he was driving with the King, any attempt should be made to save the wretched country from the greatest misfortune that could happen to it—a foreign yoke—and, worst of all, a Russian yoke. Skjöldebrand had pledged his word of honour to Löwenhaupt that no harm should come to the King, whose obstinacy had brought the country wellnigh to the verge of destruction.

Now the footman and escort had been sent away to some distance, and what might there not happen in a few minutes' time when the King and Löwenhaupt would be driving through the lonely Norrtullsgatan which, with its sparsely scattered houses and huts, was more like a desolate country lane than a street in a city. Count Löwenhaupt was no longer a young man; he was getting into years, and was scarcely able to cope with the tumultuous thoughts and feelings which agitated his breast. He was to choose between his King and his country—two words almost synonymous, did not each include the other? His teeth began to chatter with nervousness, and his whole frame shook and trembled.

The King, whom nothing ever escaped, said rather sharply: "Are you ill, Löwenhaupt? because it is not cold enough to-day to make one shiver and shake—and one's teeth chatter."

"I most humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon, but I have an ague. . . ."

The King, who had begun to talk a little more now that they had left the crowded streets, remarked: "To-day I have had *good* luck with the weather, so I am wondering what piece of *bad* luck is in store for me now; but whatever *is* the matter with you, Löwenhaupt?"

"Your Majesty, I . . . I am sitting . . ."

"Yes, but *how*? Certainly you are not sitting *still*——"

"I am pondering over Your Majesty's words, 'good luck with the weather.' Was not the weather much as it has been the whole month? Perhaps just a trifle milder in the middle of the day, when the sun was out, than now, but the nights and early mornings and evenings have been uniformly cold."

"Here it has been much as usual, I admit; but Field-Marshal Toll sent me a paper to-day, in which it said that there had been a signal change in the weather down in Skåne, and that the ice in the Sound was breaking up. That was very good news, but I do not care to be favoured by the weather—fine weather, as far as *I* am concerned, is generally a precursor of some calamity," said the King.

He spoke solemnly, as was his wont when discussing serious subjects. He stopped in his talk to lift his hand to his hat to salute some peasants, who at the approach of the Royal equipage had got out of their wooden sledges and, cap in hand, stood and made their respectful obeisances as the King passed. By this time the first small habitations in the Norrtullsgatan had been left behind, and "Becker's hostelry" was not far off. The King was looking towards it, whilst Löwenhaupt, in duty bound, kept his eyes straight to the front. There was silence between them, and Count Löwenhaupt gave a start when the sleigh, with a little swish, slipped along a bit of road, laid with fir boards, just close to the Inn.

The King still kept his eyes in that direction.

"They seem to be having a carouse in there," he said. "I saw Skjöldebrand and Björnstjerna and a few others at a window on the first floor just now. Do you know what brought them there, Löwenhaupt?"

"I did hear that there was to be a farewell dinner to some of the officers under orders for Åland," replied the King's companion; he spoke quickly and in a low tone, he could not have spoken loud and clearly! He could only think of what would be happening in the course of the next few moments. Every instant he expected to see the sleigh surrounded, the horses held up, the postilions dragged from their saddles, himself politely requested to disappear, and the King . . . ?

"They do seem to be enjoying themselves up there," said

the King ; " my officers always do seem merry whether they are going out to fight or returning from war. I wonder whether it was General Adlercreutz I saw at the window, if not it was someone very like him."

" No, Your Majesty. General Adlercreutz would most certainly not be at the hostelry this day."

" What makes you so sure of that, Löwenhaupt ? "

" Because as we were driving over the Norrbro I saw Adlercreutz on his way into the town."

" Then it must have been a vision ; I quite thought I saw Adlercreutz just now," said Gustaf Adolf.

During this conversation Löwenhaupt had endured agonies of suspense. He thought he should go mad if what *was* going to happen did not happen soon. Hark ! Was not that the sound of horses' hoofs ? Was there someone calling ? Count Löwenhaupt raised his whip to urge on the horses, but the King stopped him, and said : " I don't want to go any faster than we are going now ; I like going fast as a rule, but between Stockholm and Haga I prefer going more slowly, then I can see what a long way it really is from one to the other."

The blue sleigh had passed the last hovel in the Norrtullgatan and reached that part where the street merges into the country road. The Count turned his head ; everything was desolate and silent.

" What are you looking for, Löwenhaupt ? " said the King sharply.

" I fancied I saw that blind old man by the roadside as usual."

" Then you saw a ghost, as I did just now, because he did not happen to be there."

" Thank God, I got myself safely out of that ! " said the King's Equerry to himself. He felt more and more relieved with every yard which increased the distance between them and Becker's inn.

The King sat silent awhile, lost in thought ; then he resumed the conversation. " Was there anything you wanted to say, Löwenhaupt ? It seemed so ; you may speak boldly."

" Your Majesty believes in premonitions . . . ? "

Gustaf Adolf nodded. "Well, and what then?"

"Has Your Majesty never found that these premonitions are often false, and that that which one expects and feels so sure of never comes to pass at all? And things least expected happen in a way one never dreamt of; at least *I* often find it so."

The King reflected a moment before he answered: "That is my experience also, and yet I firmly believe in presentiments . . . even when they are *not* fulfilled."

This illogical reasoning was so like the King that Count Löwenhaupt tried to impress it on his memory, so that he might retail it as a joke on some future fitting occasion.

"For instance, good luck with the weather always brings me ill-luck with something else."

"But not to-day, surely, Your Majesty; we are just passing the gates of Haga, and Your Majesty has arrived home again safe and sound."

The King looked at Löwenhaupt with wondering eyes.

"Did *you*, perhaps, have a foreboding that I should not return safely to Haga this day? If *I* had had such a foolish premonition, you see, it would not have come true. I am inclined to think you must have met some old witch, Löwenhaupt, who predicted that we were going to be kidnapped between this and Stockholm in broad daylight. I know that old dame and her craftiness."

"What old dame, Your Majesty?" asked Löwenhaupt, startled.

"Oh, well, never mind; no sensible man believes old women's tales. But forebodings and premonitions I do believe in, and I look forward to the fulfilment of prophecy with the implicit faith I have in the existence of an almighty and just Providence."

CHAPTER XXX

UNFOUNDED RUMOURS

HIS Excellency Count Stedingk, formerly Ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg, but who, since the breaking out of hostilities with Russia, had been living at Stockholm, had been taken very ill in consequence of the trouble and annoyance caused him by his Sovereign's unreasonable and most eccentric way of going on. The chivalrous old man had been badly treated, and in his present state of sickness and depression he heartily wished he had never meddled in a cause which could not but be hopelessly lost, seeing the King could not be induced to believe that there was danger either for himself or the country. With genuine grief he reviewed in his mind the events which had passed, as he slowly sipped the calming drink his doctor had mixed for him, and which stood handy on a small table by the side of the bed where he lay in a snowy nightshirt with lace collar and cuffs, and an Indian silk nightcap on his well-kept silvery locks.

The confusion and disagreeables had begun on the afternoon of the previous Wednesday, March 19th, when the Stedingk children were enjoying a little dance they had got up. His Excellency and Major de Rodais had stood in the doorway watching the children's pleasure. A trumpet and clarinette provided not perhaps very harmonious, but sufficiently inspiring music, and the young people kept it up with graceful steps and lively pirouettes.

All at once Major de Rodais whispered into the Ambassador's ear: "Has Your Excellency heard the report that is going the round of the town? They say that the army in the West is in open rebellion against the King, and is even now marching

against the capital under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Adlersparre ; they mean to force the King to make peace, and to call the Deputies from the States together. *Forcing* the King to do anything is equivalent to deposing him, as, of course, he would never consent to such measures."

The Ambassador, lying quietly there, now called to mind that he had been beating time with his forefinger when Rodais had whispered these tidings to him, and that he had mechanically continued to beat time even when in low and startled tones he had asked : " What is that you are saying . . . where did you gather this sorrowful news ? "

" Last night, at Major Silversparre's dinner party," had been the reply.

Stedingk had taken a moment, but only one, for reflection, and had then said : " Oh, so it was *he* who said it ? You stay here with the young folk, Rodais ; I must straightway make that report known to the King . . . I shall set off for Haga at once."

And the Ambassador *had* gone to Haga and begged for a private audience and interview with the King. His arrival late in the evening, and without special command, had caused some consternation in the Royal circle, but the King himself was quite cool and collected. The Ambassador could not conceive how such awful news, so closely concerning his own person, could be received and listened to with so much apathy. Gustaf Adolf asked no questions except one, and that was as to who Stedingk's informant had been, and when the latter named de Rodais, and added that the Major had heard it at a dinner-party on the previous evening, the King merely remarked : " I will ride into the town at once and make inquiries."

" But, Your Majesty," Stedingk remonstrated, " the important point to be considered is not who might have been the originator of the rumour, but to find out what foundation there is for it, and then to take all necessary steps required for such an emergency."

" I don't believe in the truth of such reports," the King had answered, " and I cannot stand unfounded rumours and idle gossip. If it *had* been true, some of the magistrates, or other

faithful servants of the Crown in the provinces through which the army must pass, would surely have sent me timely warning."

Then Stedingk had argued that something or other might have arisen to prevent their sending a messenger with particulars; he had also given the King some slight hints that there was a possibility of even some of his trusted officials having themselves been implicated in the conspiracy and the disaffection of the army of the West.

But the King had replied: "I believe in no rumours; and, in fact, nothing which has not been reported to myself in a becoming and official manner."

His Excellency knew how terrified he had been when he had heard the King talk about that which should have been "communicated to *him* in a proper and official manner." What catastrophe might there not happen next?

His Majesty had already given orders for horses to be brought round, and desired an escort to accompany him to the capital. Stedingk also was to go. After having spoken to and taken leave of the Queen, on the stroke of ten the King mounted his charger. About an hour later he rode across the market-place and up to the Palace, to the amazement of all who saw him come, and to the great discomfiture of many who knew more of the facts than simple rumour conveyed, *aye*—a good deal more than even de Rodais and His Excellency suspected.

But the good men who had assembled at the residence of Baron Cederström, opposite the Opera House, need not have been so alarmed. As they rode by, Stedingk had seen the windows lighted up there; it was not *they* who were to undergo a severe cross-examination, but Stedingk himself and de Rodais, who had been summoned to the Palace by the King's command. As a man of honour it was natural that de Rodais should not wish to implicate anyone, so he only said that he heard two men, entire strangers to him, discussing the breaking up and mutiny of the western army and their proposed march upon the city, either at the club or in the street, he could not remember.

The King questioned him closely, but Rodais kept to what he had said. At length the painful cross-examination was at

an end for that day, at least, but the aged Ambassador had had a sleepless night in consequence, and had struck a light to look at the clock time after time. He had lain awake and wondered if the morning were ever coming, and what it would bring, and whether he should learn what measures the King had decided upon to save himself and his country ; for *whose* arrest orders had been given in Stockholm, and had he himself perhaps already set off to join the troops under Troll ? If so, a civil war would be inevitable with the foreign foe at the gates ! It was not to be wondered at that the venerable statesman was unable to close his eyes for the thought of the tragic consequences his well-meant interference might bring upon his hapless and oppressed country. But as an honest soldier, and a man who ever dealt fairly by friend or foe, he had had to do his unavoidable duty towards his lord and King, and he sincerely trusted that the latter would be prevailed upon to save the country by making peace . . . now, at the last hour.

When day dawned at last, Stedingk was informed that no arrests whatever had been made, that the King had not gone South, but had returned to Haga at half-past three in the morning as if nothing had happened. Stedingk suspected that one or another of those in the same position as himself with regard to the King had thought it wiser to appear not to know anything, and having been summoned to the Palace had, for the sake of their own safety, either entirely misled him or confirmed him in his preconceived impression that all it was necessary to do was to trace the original perpetrators and subsequent promoters of the unwarranted report which, of course, was not of the very least importance !

Stedingk was obliged to have recourse to a draught of the doctor's decoction to soothe his nerves when he thought of those false and double-dealing advisers, and of the King's inconceivable reliance on the truth of his old maxim that "Honesty is the best policy," and of the comfort he seemed to derive from it. There were certainly some who were of opinion that the King's "honesty" had most decidedly *not* proved to have been the "best policy," nor was he inclined to pass harsh judgment on those who considered that luck did not always

attend business transactions on those lines, though commendable in the main. In Russia, for instance, Stedingk had seen numberless acts of dishonesty which had turned out exceedingly well, and when he dwelt on the King's behaviour towards himself at that time, he was forced to confess that the highest principles occasionally may somehow lead to the greatest wrong.

The endless search, which the King had caused to be undertaken, to discover the originator of the rumour had naturally placed Stedingk and de Rodais in the hateful light of tale-bearers and scandalmongers. The whole afternoon of March 9th had been spent at the Chancellor's offices in examination of all who had been at the Club on that fateful Tuesday evening. The inquiries were conducted by an official examiner, and each one had to state, on his honour, what he knew. Naturally every single man of them protested that he knew nothing at all, and that this was the first occasion on which he had heard that there *had* been such a rumour !

The tedious and hateful examination was continued on the following day, when the King in person questioned those whom he mistrusted most. Of course, they one and all got out of it somehow, so that he was none the wiser ; but, later in the day, he had insisted on confronting Stedingk with de Rodais, and it was this insult which had made the old Ambassador take to his bed. De Rodais stoutly denied having heard the report otherwise than he had told the King in the first instance, and added that if he had mentioned any name in connection with it (which he certainly could not recollect having done), or if Stedingk had understood anything different, it could only be that he had perhaps expressed himself badly. Finally he said, with much dignity of speech and manner : " As an old veteran, I have long ago learnt to despise death, and if Your Majesty seeks a victim, let me alone bear the penalty. As for General Stedingk, he only obeyed the promptings of his conscience and did his duty in acquainting Your Majesty with what he had heard from me."

It had been an inexpressibly painful ordeal for the aged Ambassador when the King, with bitter words, not devoid of sarcasm, had replied to de Rodais' unequivocal remark

that he could not remember having mentioned any particular name to Stedingk, and said : " Then methinks my memory is better than yours, Colonel ; because, when at Haga, Stedingk told me distinctly that you had referred to Silversparre as having been your informant."

In the end the King overwhelmed de Rodais with a torrent of reproaches for listening to and spreading unfounded scandals, and sent him off to barracks under arrest.

Stedingk was the next upon whom the King emptied the vials of his wrath. He told him that he had serious thoughts of sending a deputation down to Wärmland with apologies to the Western army that such rumours should have been spread in the capital.

As he reflected on these things the aged General was forced to take another draught of his sedative. He had not been able to say anything in self-defence to the King, except that he very possibly might have misunderstood de Rodais, or might not have heard quite right ; and that he might have been mistaken in thinking he had mentioned a name like Silversparre or some other beginning with " Silver." These lame excuses had exasperated the King still more, and he had repeated that he hated nothing more than malice and scandal-mongering ; he had also given the honourable old statesman pretty plainly to understand that, as he could name no authority, he (the King) shrewdly suspected the whole story had been concocted with a view to forcing him to convoke Parliament and to make peace, which he well knew Stedingk was anxious he should do.

In his wrath and indignation the King had said many other hard and unjust things to the old man, which had so perturbed him that he had sunk fainting on to a chair, and now lay abed with nervous prostration and a sense of unmerited injury.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE IDES OF MARCH 1809

WHEN the King returned from one of his early morning promenades at Haga, he remarked that this twelfth of March was one of the loveliest days he had ever seen. It was a Sunday, and Queen Frederica's twenty-eighth birthday, and he went straight from the Park to her apartments to offer his good wishes and congratulations. Her Majesty was still in bed ; not having as yet quite recovered from a very serious illness she did not rise quite at such an early hour as formerly. The Royal children were with her, and when the King gently opened the door he beheld the three eldest standing by her bedside with large bouquets of flowers in their hands. She had taken the baby Princess Cecilia on to the bed, and the tiny mite had just begun to half lisp, half sing a little birthday sonnet, the elder ones joining in the chorus, as the King entered. The three little girls were in white, the Crown-Prince Gustaf in dark blue velvet with the ribbon of the Order of the Seraphim across his breast.

When the three elder children saw the King they were in doubt whether to proceed with the little song or whether first to go and kiss his hand ; but he made a sign to them to go on singing. The small four-year-old Princess then recited a few birthday verses, presenting her bouquet to the Queen. Princess Sophia continued the poem and also presented her offering of flowers, the final lines being repeated in quivering and almost inaudible tones by Prince Gustaf, who was much more shy and self-conscious than his sisters, especially in the presence of his father ; he laid *his* offering on the yellow silk coverlet and received his share of thanks and kisses. The coverlet was

richly embroidered with small groups of roses and lilies tied with "ribbons blue and bows," and the living flowers laid upon it exhaled a sweet and grateful perfume. The beautiful Queen, the pretty children, and the golden sunshine flooding the room made a charming *tout ensemble*, and the King's heart was quite softened as he bent over his Consort, kissed her, and whispered, "God bless you, and give you all happiness and joy now, and for ever!"

In his hand he held a lovely dark crimson rose which he put down by her side.

"I have no gift but this for you to-day," he said; "the times are so bad that I cannot buy pearls or jewels, but I have taken away every thorn from this rose, which I gathered myself just now in the Winter Garden."

This the King said in the same sort of tone in which the children had repeated their verses. The Queen stuck the rose in among her lace frilling, and kissed his hand; the Prince and Princesses followed suit. Then the King picked up the little Princess Cecilia in his arms, took her to the window and bade her look at the beautiful sunshine and the small, fleecy white clouds sailing along the clear blue sky. Presently he carried her back and set her on her mother's bed, looking on with some amusement as she pulled flowers out of the bouquet she had herself given to the Queen, evidently still considering it her own property, and with serious mien putting them into the Queen's hair as she had seen her maid do. If they were not as artistically placed as fashion demanded, they nevertheless looked very charming in the fair, wavy hair, and the King stood by with his hand on Prince Gustaf's shoulder taking in the fascinating picture. The elder children, as well as the small Princess Cecilia, remained perfectly silent. The King would have no laughing or talking in his presence, but they looked as interested as he did himself in the baby sister's efforts to adorn her mother.

All at once the King took out his watch, at sight of which the little faces clouded over considerably.

"It is close upon half-past ten," he said; then, turning to the Queen, he added: "Would you not like the chaplain to

read prayers here, so that you need not get up and tire yourself till after the service? Then you could receive the congratulations of the Court also; I have only invited very few to the dinner, to save you unnecessary fatigue. Shall I send for the chaplain and tell him we will have the service here?"

The Queen would far, far rather have played with her little ones or had a nice *tête-à-tête* with her husband this lovely, peaceful morning. She felt not in the very least inclined to listen to a long, dull homily from the chaplain, but she knew well that she had no choice in the matter, so she only replied in her meekest and most submissive tone: "Yes, if you wish it." Then she watched the lackeys spread the white silk cloth over the table which did duty for an altar, when for divers reasons service was held in the private apartments of either of their Majesties. When four chairs had been duly placed for the King and the three eldest children, the Crown-Prince sitting on his right and the Princesses on his left, the attendants left the room, and a solemn silence reigned whilst they waited for the chaplain.

At the Queen's request the little Princess Cecilia had been allowed to remain sitting on the bed, but the King had bidden her put down the flowers and leave off playing. From the preparations in the room, the solemn silence and the aspect of her brother and sisters sitting there bolt upright with long faces and folded hands, she knew that something unusual was about to take place, so she crept up to the soft lace pillows on which the Queen was reclining, laid her little golden head on her mother's bosom, and promptly went off into happy, peaceful dreamland; her rosy lips were parted, and the Queen felt sorely tempted to imprint a kiss upon them, but she was afraid she might disturb the King, who sat there so grave and lost in thought that he never noticed that the sun was shining full into his eyes. Presently something happened which deeply touched the Queen. As the chaplain entered with a deferential bow, the King took up his chair and sat down by her bedside. He spoke not a word, but signed to the chaplain to begin. So pleased was she with her husband's affectionate attention that she ventured to put out a small hand and gently stroke

the blue uniform by way of testifying her thanks ; but the King sat so still and motionless, with hands tightly clasped, that she hurriedly and in fear withdrew it and folded her hands also for prayer. Her husband sat by her side, her three eldest children in front of her, and her baby slept sweetly on her breast. The chaplain's solemn voice now rose in the weird silence of the room : " In the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen ! "

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A few hours later the Queen, reposing on a couch in the red drawing-room, graciously received the good wishes and congratulations of the Court. The Lord High Steward, Count Axel Fersen, who had just arrived at Haga, was in the act of conveying to Her Majesty, in most respectful language, his congratulations in honour of the day, when she suddenly interrupted him and whispered : " What has become of the King ? Where is he ? Do you know why he was called out so hurriedly ? Has anything dreadful happened ? Are the Russians upon us ? Or has he, perhaps, been suddenly taken ill that he stays away so long ? "

" It was a special messenger from Örebro, Your Majesty," replied the Lord High Steward ; " therefore most certainly there was nothing connected with the Russians. Your Majesty may rest confident the King will return in a few minutes."

Meanwhile Gustaf Adolf had shut himself into his study and was perusing the letter the messenger had brought from Örebro. He noticed that it was issued from the Provincial Governor's office and signed by Anders Widén and Leonhard Cassel, and dated " Örebro, March 10, 1809."

Three times already he had read the missive from beginning to end : " Most Gracious and most Mighty Sovereign ! " it said. " Painful as it has been for us to have had no opportunity of communicating with or humbly laying before Your Majesty an account of the very unexpected and audacious proceedings of the last few days in our Province, we now, with much satisfaction at having regained our personal liberty of which we had been wrongfully deprived for the space of forty-eight hours,

would respectfully inform Your Majesty of the same, and beg Your Majesty's gracious commands as to what measures are to be adopted by us with regard to these daring acts."

Three times the King had perused the missive so far ; he hardly dared continue, feeling that up to now he had only read, as it were, the prologue to further calamitous recitals. He was so intensely weary . . . he dared not read on, and yet . . . he *must* ! He passed his attenuated hand several times across his brow as if to clear his brain ; then drawing a deep breath, he continued to read : " On the eighteenth day of the present month, being Wednesday last, somewhere about the hour of ten in the forenoon, the entire ' Sanna ' regiment with what was left of the Örebro Squadron of the Household Brigade of Hussars, marched into the town with Major de Charlière at their head. No intimation of the disbanding of these troops or of the reason thereof had been given to the Governor, Baron Löfvenskjöld, who himself shortly afterwards, and in his own room, in the presence of the undersigned local secretary, was given to understand by Major de Charlière that he was under arrest, whereunto a considerable number of Hussars posted within and without the Castle bore but too evident testimony. It was not long before the undersigned Provincial Secretary and the Provincial Accountant were informed that they must share the fate of Your Majesty's Governor, and the strict watch kept over the Castle entirely precluded the attention to municipal affairs, so necessary in these strenuous and critical times.

" This arrest, which cut off ourselves, as well as the Governor, from the means of communication with the town, and prevented any tidings of passing events reaching Stockholm, lasted until noon this day, when we were set at liberty, and learnt to our great dismay that the town was occupied by a battalion of Your Majesty's Guards belonging to Nerike and Wärmeland, and consisting of about three hundred and twenty men under Major Cederström's command. All the gates are closed, and all exits are strongly guarded by the soldiers ; the Magistrates have been required to find quarters for about two thousand men more, who are expected from Karlstadt either to-

morrow or on Sunday. The leaders have taken possession of the stores belonging to the Crown, and the Treasurer of the Province is in close custody.

"The reason of this agitation among Your Majesty's troops is not known to the Provincial Government, but appears somewhat suspicious, as no intimation thereof had been received from official quarters, and a rumour is current likewise that the troops intend to march upon the capital."

The King read no further; he merely skimmed the rest of the lengthy and pompous rigmarole. For a long while he sat motionless, his head supported on his hand. Instead of pacing up and down to quiet his nerves as usual, he seemed utterly paralysed and unable to stir. His right hand, which grasped the letter, trembled violently; but he tried to pull himself together and to think what had best be done. Every moment was precious, his crown and even his life might be at stake. This intelligence of revolt struck him like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky. Could it be? The Western army marching on the capital, on Stockholm——?

Alas! alas! Now the King at any rate saw the first thing he must do. He seized the bell and rang it violently, as he always did when unduly excited, until a lackey appeared at the door.

"Let the Commander be summoned hither at once, this very instant."

When the latter entered he found the King sitting at his writing table, holding a crumpled piece of paper in his hand. "You must ride into town immediately and release Lieutenant-Colonel de Rodais from his arrest in the guard-room. Here is the warrant." The King hurriedly scribbled a few words on paper. "And this paper . . . this paper . . ." The King's voice quivered, and two large tears fell on the letter he had just perused. He turned away for a moment, and then continued harshly to prevent his voice trembling: "This paper you must at once deliver to General Stedingk and ask him if he can forgive me. Now go, start off immediately, ride for your life, and make haste back again." Having done this, the King was free for the nonce to turn his thoughts to his own and his family's affairs. He took up the decanter in front of him and

poured out a tumbler of water, which he emptied at one draught. He was calm and resigned, but he *felt* as he had only felt once in his life before . . . on the day he had heard that his father had been assassinated. In blind haste pictures of what he had never seen but of what he had heard, passed before his mind's eye . . . the murder of his father . . . the revolution in France. Now he saw the visions more clearly in connection with others in rapid succession . . . Louis XVI in the cart on his way to execution . . . Marie Antoinette . . . Madame Elisabeth . . . he sat thinking of these, and cold drops of agonising fear pearly on his brow. He tried to pray, but he could not pray . . . he endeavoured to think, but he could not think; he could only repeat to himself: "I *cannot* sit still and wait; I will not share the fate of a dethroned King . . . I will not be assassinated . . . murdered! It is too sacred, too great, too beautiful a day . . . my Queen's birthday!"

Again he put his hands to his head; *they* were cold like ice, whilst *it* burnt like fire. He rang the bell with the same violence as before.

"Tell them to counter-order the gala dinner at once . . . I shall dine in my own apartments—let dinner be served to me here, but be quick."

The man went, but scarcely had he reached the door when the bell rang once more with the same persistency. Another lackey answered it; the King's servants never kept him waiting, especially when he rang in that fashion.

"Let Count Fersen be informed that I desire his presence here."

In a few minutes Count Fersen entered; the King advanced to meet him.

"Fersen," he said, "I commit the Queen and the Royal children to your care, whilst I ride to Stockholm to make preparations for a counter-revolution."

By the expression of amazement on his features, the King could see that Count Fersen, contrary to his usual quickness of perception, had failed to grasp what he wished to convey.

"One contingent of the Western army," he said, "has forsaken its post against the enemy, and is marching on the

capital. No one knows better than myself that the people of Stockholm do not love me, though they would fain persuade me of the contrary ; but I *do* know that I have a loyal army down in Skåne, and that the people there are truly devoted to me . . . I know what that means and in whom I can trust. He will not suffer me to be put to open shame. He who tries the heart and reins knows the purity of my intentions, and that I have right on my side. Therefore I will not despair. My greatest concern is for the safety of the Queen and her children." Suddenly the King stopped ; he seemed exhausted with talking. He took another deep draught of water, and then said in his gentlest tones : " This is not the first time you have been called upon to protect a Queen with your life . . . what you once did for Marie Antoinette of France, I know you would do again, if need be, for your own Queen Frederica of Sweden. And by the help of God, with better success ! Swear to me that you will never leave the Queen and her children, but stand loyally by them and watch over them at Haga until you receive other instructions from me."

" I swear never to leave them until Your Majesty orders otherwise," solemnly answered the Count.

" You must take command of everything here at Haga. When I have gone, give orders to the servants to pack up everything, and intimate to the Queen and to the Court that they hold themselves in readiness to leave this place betimes to-morrow if required ; do your best to soothe and comfort the Queen. In a little while I shall go and tell her that urgent business requires my immediate presence at Stockholm . . . that is true, and she need not know any more at present. I do not wish to trouble her."

The King dismissed the Lord High Steward with the customary inclination of the head, and remained alone until his dinner was served.

When he went to the Queen, at four o'clock, he found her alone in the red drawing-room. She gave a startled look at him, but dared not ask any questions. He said : " I have come to bid you good-bye for to-day ; I am going to Stockholm now to settle some important affairs, and as they will probably

occupy me part of the night, I shall have to sleep there. What a lovely day it has been. . . .”

He went to one of the large windows and looked out ; for a long while he was absorbed in the contemplation of the exquisite view—the little Bay and its shores bathed in sunshine. He turned and kissed the Queen. She took his icy hand and pressed her warm lips upon it ; but he hastily withdrew it.

“ Would you like to see the children ? ” asked she gently.

“ No ; give them my love. and tell the Crown-Prince . . . ”

“ What shall I tell Gustaf ? ”

“ Oh, nothing . . . nothing . . . ”

“ What am I to do whilst you are away ? ” whispered the Queen, lifting her beautiful, dreamy eyes to the King’s face.

“ You must take your prayer-book and pray,” cried the King so loud that it made her start, and without another look at her he left the red room, and the next minute she heard him and his suite ride away.

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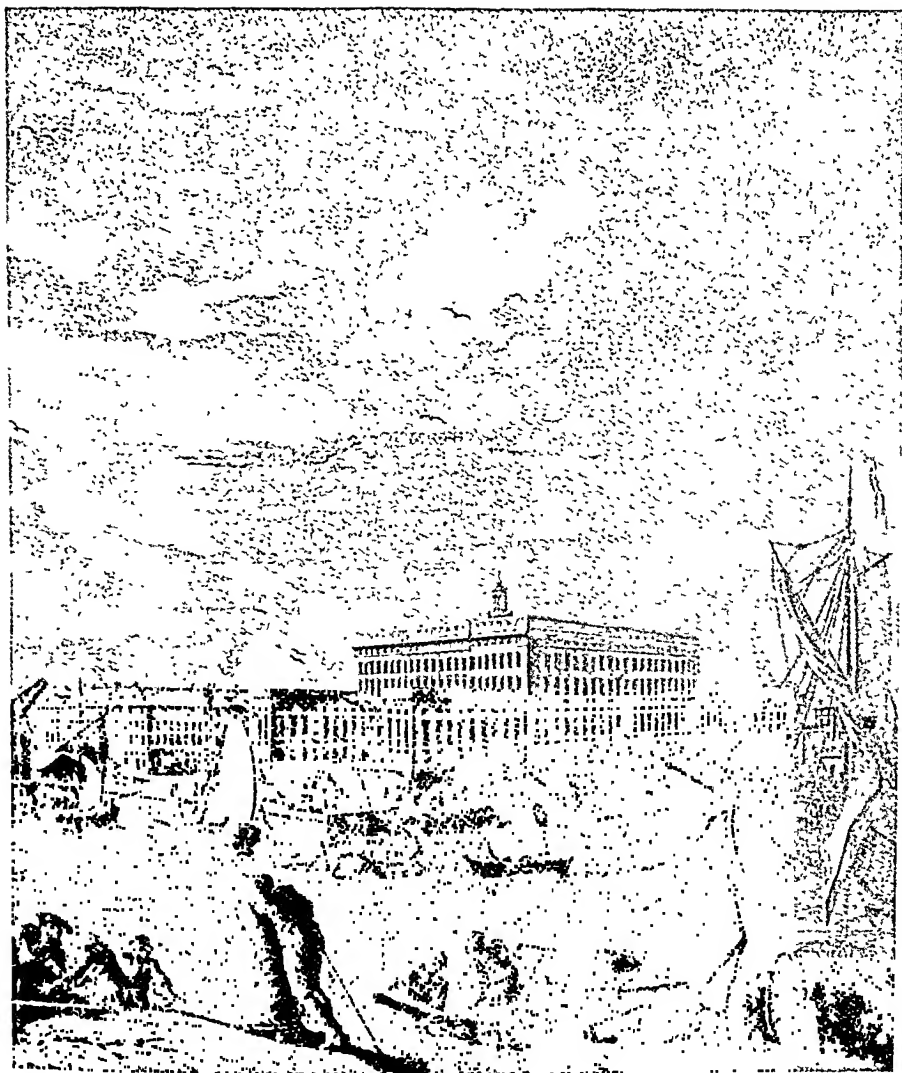
It was the first Sunday in spring, and the weather magnificent. The sun’s rays were quite hot, the sky cloudless, and all Stockholm was basking in the open air. The small shopkeepers and labourers had made an excursion to Norrtull, taking their wives and little ones with them ; when the King and his companions reached the town there was great excitement. The pleasure-seekers stopped as he passed, the women made low curtsies and the men respectful bows, as was right and proper for loyal subjects. The King saluted as usual, and from his looks no one could have guessed but that he also was taking advantage of the lovely day and taking a ride for pleasure ; yet some wondered why, if that were his object, he should have left beautiful rural Haga and come into the town, and that on a Sunday afternoon and the Queen’s birthday too. The King’s ugly white setter kept close to the horse’s heels hot and panting.

In Stockholm itself the streets teemed with holiday folk, tempted out by the pleasant, vernal air. Most of the women

had discarded their winter garments and furs in anticipation of spring, and appeared in clothes of brilliant and varied hue. They had hardly time to drop their curtsies before the King had passed ; he took his way up to the Palace and into the inner court.

He ordered the drawbridges to be drawn up, and all gates except the one leading to the guard-room to be securely closed. Then he ran up the stairs to his own apartments. As soon as he reached what was known as the " Little " bedroom, which was not in reality small, though rather low-pitched, he rang a long, loud peal. He desired a large number of persons of all ranks and conditions, civil and military, to be called with all speed to the Palace, and special messengers both on foot and on horseback were sent forth to every quarter of the city. The first to be summoned was the Duke of Södermanland, and as he had his apartments in another wing of the Palace it was supposed he would answer the invitation without delay. But a quarter of an hour elapsed before he presented himself . . . fifteen minutes of mental agony for the King, who was again obsessed by gloomy visions and forebodings ; it recurred to his mind how in turning over some papers a few days since, in a case in which a collection of portraits of the family of Gustavus Wasa was kept, he had found that one was missing, that of " Old Guss " himself. The loss had upset him very much, and he had commanded every nook and corner of the Palace to be thoroughly searched for the missing portrait. In the end he had come upon it himself in a small box of ebony, in shape not unlike a coffin. Could this coincidence have been intended to signify that the House of Wasa was doomed ? His thoughts wandered back to the first monarch of that race. . . He thought of . . . " His Royal Highness the Duke of Södermanland," announced a loud voice.

The Duke, so short of stature, stood before his nephew in the most correct attitude, looking a good deal calmer than he really felt. The King fixed his eyes upon his uncle, but could say nothing for a time ; he passed his hand over his forehead, and then said, as if repeating a well-learnt lesson : " I sent for you, uncle, that I might talk over with you some news I heard



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at Haga this morning ; that is, that the Western army is in open revolt and marching upon Stockholm."

All the time he was speaking he never took his eyes off the Duke's face. The latter uttered an exclamation of surprise. "After that it is impossible for me to be responsible for anyone except myself," he said excitedly.

"To be able to answer for oneself is *something*," retorted the King sharply, then continued in his usual tone: "I wish further to tell you, Uncle, what plans I have made with regard to this unfortunate occurrence. I thought first I would shut myself up here in the city and defend myself to the end, and my orders were issued accordingly ; but after reading Adlersparre's revolutionary proclamation, I have decided to leave Stockholm with such troops as are available, and join the Grenadiers who are now on their way to the coast ; with this united contingent I shall march forward to meet the rebels and force them to return to their duty. If I thought of my own safety only and that of my son, I should this very night return to Haga, whence, by a devious road, I could easily reach the highway leading South, but out of consideration for the Queen I cannot do that. In the present condition of affairs the separation from myself and her son would kill her, so I have made up my mind that she and the Royal children shall pass through Stockholm to-morrow at an early hour, and proceed to Telge, where they will spend the night. When they are safely gone I myself shall ride to the gates to show I am not afraid."

The Duke shook his head and said : "My dear nephew, if you carry out *that* plan there will certainly be civil war. Why not do the *only* thing now possible . . . make Peace ? "

The King cried passionately : "No, no ; *that* I *cannot* do—I *may* not. I must tell you about a vision I had a few nights ago at the beginning of this month. I saw the 'White Lady ! ' "

The Duke involuntarily fell a step back. "Is it possible ? " he said.

"Of course it is ; I saw that renowned spectre which watches over every member of the House of Brandenburg, and

only shows itself when great danger threatens or when death is about to claim a victim of that House, to which *we* also belong . . .”

“Did you really see the ‘White Lady’? When? And how did she look and what did she say?”

“It was nigh upon midnight. I had hardly lain down when the ‘White Lady’ stood before me in my dream. She did not say anything, but made some mysterious passes which most surely were meant to indicate my person and could not be misinterpreted. I cannot say what they were, but that much I can tell you. Uncle, it was a revelation, a command to persevere in the line of conduct I have adopted and to make no compromise with the ‘BEAST.’”

For a moment the Duke stood hesitating; then he said: “Is that your interpretation of the vision?”

“Yes, Uncle, that and none other,” said the King, pacing up and down and nervously swallowing a glass of water before he again addressed the Duke.

“You are, of course, coming with me to-morrow, Uncle, are you not?”

“I shall be of more service to yourself and our Fatherland if I remain where I am,” replied the Duke evasively.

“No, no; you must come; I want every member of the Royal House to go with me when I leave this.”

This time the Duke made no reply; he could see the end of the interview approaching, so he bowed himself out much relieved. The door had scarcely closed behind him when the King again rang his bell.

“Is the Deputy Governor, Baron Edelcreutz, in the antechamber?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Usher him in then.”

The King advanced to meet him and addressed him in the same way he had addressed his uncle. He could not find other words in which to clothe the gloomy prospects.

“I summoned you, Baron Edelcreutz, to tell you that information from the secretary’s office reached me at Haga this day, that the Western army is in revolt and marching upon

Stockholm." The King *had* to repeat himself, but time was flying apace, and he must see to everything, so he had no leisure to watch what sort of impression his communication made upon Edclercutz, as he had watched the Duke, and he continued: "I wish you to call a meeting of the magistrates and fifty of the oldest burghers, and inform them of these untoward circumstances, and exhort them in my name to do all they can to uphold quiet and order in the capital."

The King waved his hand as a sign that the interview was at an end, and so Edclercutz withdrew. In the antechamber he stopped to speak to some of the persons waiting there. Again the King's bell made itself heard.

"Bid General Melin come hither."

When the King had similarly informed that gentleman of the disaster, he paused for a while and took his accustomed tramp up and down the room, his hands clasped behind his back. He had to make a great effort every time he communicated the direful news to any of his staff; he stopped again in front of the General and said: "Owing to this regrettable occurrence, I should wish the sentries at the gates to be doubled and patrols to be sent to every part of the city to see that the people are on the alert; the password also must be changed."

The General reiterated his zeal, but the King had no time to listen. He intimated to him that the conversation was finished, and sat down to write to Field-Marshal Toll, in command of the army in the South, ordering him to join him with all the men at his disposal. Again the King's bell pealed, and orders were given for the dispatch of a special messenger with the letter to Toll, and for the presence of the Minister of the Interior, Count Rosenblad.

When the latter entered the King greeted him with the words: "What do you think of Adlersparre's treachery? I wonder if there are many more like him about me; but I assume that all honourable, right-minded men will stand by their King and abhor such ways. I am going to leave the city and, with God's help, I will punish the traitors. Sit down,

Rosenblad, and write out the proclamation which must be sent to the printers at once and distributed with to-morrow's Gazette."

Rosenblad did as he was desired, and in his scornful, rasping Skåne voice he read it aloud to the King, sentence by sentence, who altered and amended it until it read as he would have it. He was certainly very troublesome with regard to the first paragraph of the proclamation, and was not satisfied until Rosenblad most unwillingly had altered it half a dozen times, at least. Finally the King read it out himself. "At a time when the Kingdom is threatened by enemies on every side, and when Unity and Strength are so urgently needed to defend the country from a foreign foe, it has been a most unexpected and grievous blow to Us, that attacks should also have been meditated from within."

"That is what you must say, Rosenblad, just that, and . . ."

But the King was much too excited to be able to dictate a single sentence. The words clung to his tongue and the colour forsook his face. He hurriedly turned his back to Rosenblad. After a while he said with quivering voice: "You must say, Rosenblad, that it is with the deepest grief WE would convey to Our loyal and beloved subjects, the sorrowful news that rebellion has broken out among Our troops in Wårmland, and that they, under command of . . . well, you know yourself what you had better say; but don't forget to mention that they are on the march to the capital, committing acts of violence against Our people and issuing most lawless and corruptible manifestos! And say too that we are fully persuaded that if misfortune should be still further heaped upon Us . . . I can't say any more; *you* understand."

Again the King was silent until, at his request, Rosenblad read out the paragraph about the King's being "fully persuaded that the greater the misfortune, the greater would be the loyalty of his subjects."

"Yes, that is it," said the King, and, as if strengthened by the trust himself would inspire, he dictated the final paragraph in a steady voice: "We are confident that in all quietness and order you will further and uphold all measures, ways and

means We are preparing to put in force, in order to put down this most sinful agitation."

The King stopped and bade Rosenblad read so far ; then he went on : " It will be the greatest satisfaction to Us to find that the number of offenders to be given up to the law for just punishment is less than We have been led to believe. We have unlimited confidence and trust in God and the hope that He will watch over Us and You and turn away all evil—We commend Ourselves and You to His most gracious keeping," Rosenblad said the words aloud as he wrote them.

" That is all right now," said the King ; let a fair copy be made and instantly sent to the printers. If you should happen to come across Chancellor Ehrenheim, be so good as to tell him I am waiting for him now."

In another minute Rosenblad had gone and Ehrenheim entered.

" I suppose by this time you are aware of what has occurred, Ehrenheim ? " said the King.

" Alas, yes, Your Majesty, I know."

" Very well, then ; I leave the capital to-morrow, with my family and suite. I wish you and other members of the Government to accompany us. I have ordered the necessary means of conveyance. On the Queen's account, we shall only travel twenty-five miles per day, with an escort of Lancers and the ' Queen's Own,' who are already on the road to Telge, where the night is to be spent, and where other forces have been ordered to join us."

" Sad news, indeed," said the Chancellor, in a tone which was unusually warm and sympathetic from that very stolid personage.

The King, naturally, supposed that these words were intended to refer to the revolt of the soldiers, and answered hotly : " Has it not come true, what I always told you, that March would bring much unhappiness and bad luck with it ? "

" Oh, Your Majesty," Ehrenheim replied, " events may turn out even more disastrous than you fancy, not only for Your Majesty but for all the Royal Family, if Your Majesty refuses to take the *only* step which will allay the storm."

"Do you think, then, the revolutionaries would dare to touch my family?" asked the King, planting himself straight in front of the speaker, who replied in his usual tone of frigid composure:

"Every opposition to the revolutionaries only spurs them on to greater efforts, and in order to shield themselves from any reaction, they spare nothing when their heads are at stake. I must frankly say that the only means to save Your Majesty and the Royal Family, is for Your Majesty to convoke the Parliament, recall the troops and . . . promise . . . Peace."

The King refused to hear any more. He interrupted Ehrenheim angrily, and said: "Peace—indeed! Have you forgotten that honourable dealing and a pure conscience are of greater value to the Anointed of the Lord than life itself? I took an oath and the *Lord's Supper on my vow never to make peace with Buonaparte."

Ehrenheim did not answer; had he done so the King would not have listened to him, so he only shrugged his shoulders and rubbed his hands, as if he were washing them, and, metaphorically, he *was* washing them . . . of the King!

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The night was far advanced, but the King was wide awake, and the whole palace in hurry and confusion, behind locked gates and closed bridges.

In the room adjoining the King's bedchamber clerks were sitting busy writing, and there was continual coming and going. Gustaf Adolf mostly walked up and down, occasionally addressing one or another of those present, sometimes speaking quite loud. Even the coffee he had ordered for three o'clock he took standing. Etiquette demanded that none should sit so long as the King remained standing, and as he bade fair to spend the whole night either standing or walking, every one was pleased to be able to go away when a new-comer was announced. Punctually at three the Chief of the Cabinet, Count Fabian Fersen, presented himself. The King held an animated conversation with him about the safety of the

* An old Scandinavian custom to render a vow more inviolable.

National Bank, and the sums to be drawn from it for his actual needs.

At last Chancellor Ehrenheim obtained the ardently desired permission to go home, as did also some of the other weary gentlemen. In the King's apartments all had been comparatively quiet, although there had been continual hustling and bustling in the outer room, lackeys and servants bearing in such things as were supposed to be wanted for the impending journey.

He was now closeted with his Secretary of State, Rosenblad ; the latter was writing, whilst the King stood by the window with hands clasped and face upturned, watching the crimson sunrise. It was a beautiful sight, and though from the window there was little to be seen but bricks and mortar, the King stood entranced, reverently watching the stray beams gild roofs and pillars. So lost was he in contemplation that he had not observed that Rosenblad had risen and was waiting, with a document in his hand, to read to the King, who, in his absorption in the scene before him, seemed to have forgotten everything else. But at length he turned and said to Rosenblad : " It appears as if this thirteenth day of March is going to be beautiful, more beautiful even than yesterday ! I am thankful for it for the Queen's sake. Lovely weather for travelling." And he sighed, as if the fine weather were another cause for sorrow. Then he tried to concentrate his thoughts on the present, took the paper from Rosenblad's hand and read it through.

" Yes, that is right," he said ; " take it to the Bank with you, and read it out on my behalf at the meeting I have arranged for there at seven o'clock, and now good-bye, for the present."

Again the King's bell was rung impatiently.

" Show in Commander Löwenhaupt and let Field-Marshal Klingspor and Major-General Adlercreutz be informed that their attendance will be required at the Palace at eight o'clock," commanded the King.

His interview with Commander Löwenhaupt was short. He overwhelmed him with inquiries as to whether the troops had arrived, so Löwenhaupt promptly said he must go and seek

information on the point, and departed ; a little while after, and standing at the door, he reported that the troops in question were at the palace and the cavalry now coming up.

The next person the King desired to see was Major-General Helvig, and he was much annoyed when told that that officer was not on the spot. In his stead he had an interview with Count Ugglas. The discussion between them lasted a considerable time, and just as that very stout and ungainly personage, with his abnormally huge head, was taking his leave and awkwardly bowing himself out, the Duke of Södermanland entered, looking haggard and exhausted.

"I have come, my dear boy, to beseech you once more not to leave the city, and if you still adhere to your resolve . . ."

"I do, I do !" exclaimed the King ; "it is firm as a rock, unshakable."

"In that case I must beg of you to excuse the Duchess and myself from being your travelling companions."

"My uncle and aunt will surely humour my will and accompany me," said the King in a tone which admitted of no contradiction.

When the Duke perceived that it was no use expostulating with his wayward nephew, and that the dark flush which betokened a rising storm was mounting to his face, he thought it wise to beat a retreat.

But a most unexpected and curious spectacle ensued.

The King flung both arms round his uncle's neck and laid his head on his shoulder, as he had been used to do as a little child and under his uncle's guardianship.

"We must hold to each other," he sobbed.

But the very next moment he had resumed his customary stiff and motionless posture in the middle of the room, and given the usual haughty wave of the hand for dismissal, which at all times was wont to exasperate the Duke ; he thought he must have dreamt that other short scene !

Then the Major-General, who had hurriedly been sent for, arrived, just in time to receive a violent objurgation from the King for having failed to procure horses for the gun-carriages and he was commanded in loud and angry tones

to do so at once and at all hazards, even if the horses of private individuals should have to be borrowed or . . . "commandeered."

He closed the door himself after Helvig, who did not fail to report to all and sundry in the antechamber that His Majesty was in the very worst of tempers. As the King shut the door he observed that quite a crowd seemed to be waiting in the ante-room.

For a time he remained alone, and tried to calm his nerves and collect his thoughts. The old white setter, once the property of the Duke of Enghien, which the King had acquired from Ettenheim, was careering wildly across the inner courtyard. The King was about to open the casement and whistle to him . . . he looked at the clock instead. Eight o'clock, or nearer half-past eight ! He rang his bell.

"Are His Excellency, Count Klingspor and Major-General Adlercreutz here ? "

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Show in His Excellency Count Klingspor."

Count Klingspor had been in the room some little time, but it had not pleased the King to turn from his post at the window, or to notice his presence.

The waiting had been most painful for Klingspor, when at last the King condescended to speak.

"I sent for you to give you some orders, Klingspor. This forenoon I leave the city to go to meet the troops who have mutinied, and to . . . punish them."

He spoke constrainedly, and with some difficulty, and considering he had had no rest that night the General did not wonder at the King's weariness, and was rather pleased it should be so much *en évidence*.

"Might a true and loyal subject be permitted to make a petition and request to Your Majesty ? " he said.

"Certainly not," retorted the King sharply. "I know very well what you would suggest, but I will not give ear to any number of 'true and loyal subjects.' . . . They would prove their loyalty to better purpose by implicitly obeying my orders than by thrusting their unasked advice upon me. I know what

I am doing better than any one else can ; I sent for you to give you my instructions, not to discuss my plans."

The King had raised his voice perceptibly ; perhaps he thought it would be as well if those in the antechamber heard his remarks ; then he resumed his everlasting tramp !

His Excellency Klingspor stood by the door . . . When the King's back was turned he had surreptitiously laid his hand on the handle. He had been greatly offended by the King's language, but dared he venture to withdraw unbidden ? That would be an unheard-of piece of boldness, which he felt he could not perpetrate. But he quietly, and without making the least sound, turned the handle and opened the door, and when the King turned he beheld Adlercreutz, Silversparre, and five other officers of rank standing on the threshold.

Adlercreutz advanced towards the King, who looked much astonished, and said : " I think you have made a mistake, General Adlercreutz ; I did not send for you—nor for you, either, gentlemen " ; and he pointed to the door.

" Your Majesty," said Adlercreutz, with his strong Finnish accent, which the King much preferred to Rosenblad's Skånsk brogue, " the whole country is alarmed at this unfortunate state of affairs, still more so at Your Majesty's decision to leave the capital ; therefore, the military and civil administrators, as well as other honourable and loyal citizens, have deputed me to prevent this journey, for which purpose . . . "

At this point the King seemed to grasp the situation.

" Treason ! " he cried, " you have been led astray, and you will have to suffer for it."

" We have not been led astray, neither are we traitors ; our only desire is to save Your Majesty and our country."

The King had drawn his sword, and stood with his back against the wall ; there was a moment's struggle for the weapon.

Adlercreutz had seized the King round the waist, and Silversparre wrenched the sword out of his hand from behind.

" Help, help ! They want to murder me ! " shrieked the King, as loud as he could.

" We do not want to harm Your Majesty, but we want to save our country."

"Give me back my sword, this minute. Help, help! Give me my sword. Help, help! Here!"

There was shaking and kicking at the outer door of the King's apartments. It was locked and held tight by the officers from within; the retinue and servants were eager to gain an entrance and rescue the King.

They tried with swords, axes, and hammers, and even attempted to pick and wrench off the lock—the panels, composed of mirror-glass, flew in a thousand atoms all over the room, breaking the crystal chandelier on their way. Loud above the tumult and confusion rose the voice of the King, crying, "Save me! for the love of Christ, save me!"

Adlercreutz took a few steps towards the shattered door and opened it; then he went into the antechamber, and seizing the staff of office out of General Melin's hand, said in a sharp tone of command: "By virtue of the position I now hold, I command you to withdraw at once."

But the King did not believe or expect that his bodyguard would withdraw. He no longer called for help—he felt he was safe. There was such a crowd around him now that he was no longer able to see what was going on, but he could hear the stern voice and Finnish accent of Adlercreutz as he said: "Withdraw at once and keep quiet, or you will have to take the consequences; the King's life is in no danger, but necessity demands that we should secure his person, and that he should be kept under strict guard."

Whom did Adlercreutz dare to refer to as "He"?

"Give me my sword! Give me back my sword!" shrieked the King. But Adlercreutz's voice was stronger than his; he was accustomed to command on the field of battle, and could make himself heard, which the King could *not*.

"You, General, must consider yourself under arrest; you, Commander Löwenhaupt, are my prisoner until further notice; (to the adjutant) I also arrest you, sir. Come with me this way, gentlemen!" The loud tone of command jarred harshly upon the King.

There were but few persons with him now, and there was silence in the room. Count Gyldenstolpe and Major von Otter

kept guard over him. Field-Marshal Klingspor, who during the affray had discreetly obliterated himself in an embrasure of the window, now stepped forth from his hiding-place.

The King was slowly recovering from the sudden and violent attack ; his mind was in a curious state of confusion. The occurrences of the last few hours did not strike him as anything new ; he seemed to have passed through all these scenes before, to have heard the same questions and answers, to have witnessed the same incidents in a prior state of existence. His own person had been in the like predicament ; he had seen that room before in a state of disorder and topsy-turveydom, as if an earthquake had occurred ; the broken panels, which had wrought havoc with the mirrors and glass around, lay in hopeless confusion among the fragments of crystal and the blue and yellow plumes from the officers' hats. He seemed also to have made the same reflections as now in that other life he believed himself to have lived ; the place looked, he opined, as if a cock-fight had been going on, and the combatants had viciously pulled out each other's feathers. When he saw Klingspor emerge from his concealment he thought he had already scornfully remarked : "The Field-Marshal has but one eye, therefore he did not want to risk losing the other, and thought it safer to be an interested spectator of the disturbance from a distance." The King had also once before heard him say : "I beseech Your Majesty to sign a proclamation for a convocation of the States," and once before he had thought this a curious request to make to a captive Sovereign, and had replied then as now : "Give me back my sword, then we will discuss the matter." The King had known that after that reply Klingspor would go—and he *had* gone. "He is going to the Duke," thought the King once more with contempt.

Gustaf Adolf was alone now with the aged General Strömfelt and Count Ugglas, the others having left the room at the same time as Klingspor—they were all of them going to the Duke, he thought ; he knew Ugglas was talking by way of comforting him, and he answered mechanically, as he had done in that other life.

The only experience which was new to him was the insult

of having had his sword taken from him by force. "If only I had my sword—if only I could get at my sword;" Whenever he caught sight of the empty scabbard he felt insulted, degraded—injured like a child that has had a dangerous plaything taken from him; and it required all his powers to restrain himself from bursting into frantic screams of: "Give me my sword! Give me back my sword!" He could almost have scratched and bitten those who disobeyed him.

General Strömfelt stood in front of the King and pondered what might be in his (the King's) mind, for he kept his eyes fixed on the General, measuring him from top to toe. That fixed stare made the old man feel awkward, as it did all who had to endure it. The General tried to make some remark, but, owing to having lost his teeth, his utterance was probably not very distinct. The King did not seem to have heard, for he came nearer and nearer, so that the poor old man kept confusedly repeating what he had said, secretly wondering whether anything had gone wrong with his uniform during the scuffle.

Whilst the General was thus wondering, the King had surreptitiously pulled the old man's sword out of its scabbard; his heart thumped violently, and his whole frame shook with excitement as he held the weapon in his hand, and the words he had uttered on coming of age rang in his ears: "Now I am in very deed a King!" His bearing was proud, his eyes sparkled, and life and colour returned to his weary face.

Count Ugglas gave General Strömfelt a wink which called his attention to his loss.

"I most humbly request Your Majesty to give me back my sword," he said.

The King pretended not to hear. The General repeated his request with as steady a voice as he could command: "I humbly request Your Majesty to let me have back my sword."

"No, no," replied Gustaf Adolf in a spirited tone of rebuke, "if *I* can be a *King* without a sword, you can just as easily be a *General* without a sword."

At that moment the voice of Adlercreutz made itself heard, and through the broken panel of the door the King could see him in the outer room, in earnest conclave with the officers

congregated there. As he heard the loud, grating voice, he thought, "They are condemning me to the same fate as the Emperor Paul."

There were two doors to the apartment where the King was confined ; one of these had been burst open, and through it watch was being kept on him ; the other was not guarded at all, and only *he* noticed that that door flew open as if by magic the moment Adlercreutz entered.

"There," thought the King, "I knew very well that God would never forsake him who puts his trust in Him ; He put a sword into my hand and opened a door for me " ; then he took his hat, put it on, and as Adlercreutz stepped across the threshold the King darted out of the other door, locked it after him, and kept the key in his hand ; he heard the harsh voice of Adlercreutz crying : "The King is escaping, after him ! "

Meanwhile the latter was hurrying up the winding staircase leading to the apartments of the Queen ; he heard a great commotion behind him ; they, his pursuers, had kicked out the panels of the second door and were close upon his heels. On the top step he turned and flung the key he held in his hand into the face of Adlercreutz ; it missed, but the surprise diverted the attention of the pursuers for a few moments, and gave the King an advantage. He hurried through the Queen's apartments, and considerably scared and startled the men and women-servants who were busy putting them in order. He bade them close the doors after him, which, however, they seemed too frightened to do, or perhaps they dared not, seeing the King was being chased by officers of the State ; maybe they had not even fully understood his request, given in a hoarse, gasping voice. Presently one of his pursuers tripped on the stairs, and this impeded the progress of the others. The King quickened his pace ; he was so well in front now that he hoped he would be able to reach the guard-room ; that was what he was making for. "If I can but get *there*," he thought, "I should be able to get out to the people and the German soldiers, and either put a stop to the revolution or put an end to my days." He was determined not to be recaptured. Faster and faster he ran ; he was spare

and light of foot, and well acquainted with every nook and cranny in the Palace. Now he had come to the stairs leading from the Queen's dressing-room, and was hurrying down them when, as ill-luck would have it, he tripped on one of the first steps, fell forward, gave his right arm a severe blow, and wounded his hand on the sword; however, he picked himself up as quickly as he could, and ran on along the narrow corridor which divided one part of the Palace from the other. He had only to cross the inner quadrangle now in order to reach the western gate, where the guard-room was situated; this last bit was the most dangerous of all, a longish way in the open and in the full light of the moon. However, he set his teeth—he meant to save himself—God would save him.

So he rushed out of the Palace and made a dash for the gate, and in doing so fell foul of one of his pursuers, who cannoned right against him! The King recognised in him an old officer named Greiff, still straight and upright as a dart.

The fugitive pointed his sword at the man's breast, but stopped and drew back his arm to give greater force to his thrust.

"Ah, if I had not hurt my arm, and had my own sword, I could have killed him," thought the King. Greiff parried the blow and seized the hilt of the sword, but the point had penetrated his sleeve and laid open his arm from wrist to elbow. The King endeavoured to draw back his sword, but it stuck so fast that the breathless, exhausted monarch had not strength to pull it out for further use if need arose. His arms were tightly gripped by his muscular opponent, and he felt utterly powerless and ready to drop, though he struggled hard when Greiff, grasping his right hand as if in a vice, and putting his uninjured arm round the thin figure, violently turned him in a northerly direction and forcibly led him away. He stood with his back leaning against a pillar, panting, groaning, and crying aloud for help, when one of the Palace wood-carriers happened to pass the spot. He heard the man say to Greiff: "What are you going to do with the King?" and then Greiff's calm reply: "Oh, I am not going to hurt him."

Gustaf Adolf tried to speak; he opened his lips, but not a

sound could he bring forth, like a man in a trance who sees and hears what is going on around but is powerless to complain; he felt utterly exhausted by his excitement and exertions. He made renewed efforts to say something, but again failed; and as he saw that poor Swedish peasant go away his heart sank within him, and he began to lose hope. When the man was finally out of sight the King thought that now God had also forsaken him. "There is no longer any hope for me," he said to himself. "I meant to speak to that man, but I could not . . . he might not have understood me, either."

Greiff looked round for assistance. Was not Adlercreutz coming with some of his men? Keeping guard over the half-fainting King was no easy task, and fraught with a certain amount of danger. Greiff alone, and on his own responsibility, dared not take him up the grand staircase, where the German soldiers were posted with rifles loaded.

At last Adlercreutz and his companions appeared on the scene.

"He cannot walk, he will have to be carried," said Greiff, taking hold of the King with two of the others and begging the General to lead the way.

And thus he was borne through the archway up the Queen's grand staircase, through her apartments and the great gallery. As they passed the two sentries posted at the doors of the Queen's rooms, the King, with a great effort, called out, "*Skjut, skjut!* (shoot, shoot!) obey me, and . . . fire!"

For the moment he could not remember whether they were German soldiers or Swedish, so with hoarse and feeble voice he gave the order in both tongues. The men, however, it appears, could not make out whether the King had said *Sjuk* (ill) or *Skjut* (fire).

In his gruff, rough way Greiff explained: "Can't you see that His Majesty is ill? Open the doors, quick!"

That done, they carried him into the first of the state-rooms, and here he felt his strength in some measure returning.

"I want to rise and walk," he said, and supported by some of the conspirators he was allowed to walk into the next room. There two Lifeguardsmen of the "Duke of Södermanland's

Own" stood on guard; as the King passed they presented arms, presumably from sheer force of habit.

When the third gallery was reached, his captors were in some perplexity as to how best to get to the King's apartments without going through the rest of the state-rooms, which it were wiser to avoid, seeing that a number of people, whose sentiments were not altogether to be relied upon, had assembled there. It was known that some among them were devoted and faithful adherents of the King's.

Gustaf Adolf, in the midst of the confederates, could hear their conversation distinctly.

He was wondering whether it were the will of God that he should not regain his liberty; had Providence wished to help him he would not have been suffered to lose his voice at the very moment he was about to speak to the poor wood-carrier in the quadrangle, nor would the German guards have been permitted to misunderstand his command. As he had not been allowed to make good his escape, he concluded that God, in His infinite Wisdom, had ordered it otherwise.

Meanwhile, the confederates had not yet agreed upon the non-advisability of taking the King through the crowded rooms. De la Grange considered it would be most foolish, and Silver-sparre sided with him.

"We have no choice; we *must*," said Adlercreutz. "March, forward!"

Then, to the utter amazement of those present, the King himself pointed to a side door, and said, in a feeble voice: "Do you not know your way about the Palace better than that, gentlemen? You can go through there and find a door leading into the 'White' room, and you will find it empty."

Most surely this man was not as other men are!

The door to the "White" room was discovered without difficulty, and his captors set the King down on a chair by the window overlooking the Strömmen and Norrbro. The waves of the Strömmen glistened and glittered in the glorious sunshine, and numbers of people in carriages and on foot passed in a constant stream across the bridge.

But the King was not taking in the view; he sat motionless,

his hat still on his head, and when he *did* raise his eyes he fixed them upon a picture which hung immediately in front of him ; it represented Marie Antoinette, the ill-fated Queen of France.

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At one o'clock in the morning, under a strong escort, the King was taken through the galleries and the Queen's apartments, to the eastern gate, where a closed carriage was waiting to convey him to Drottningholm ; he walked slowly, his eyes half-shut, like one walking in his sleep, his hat well pulled down over his face, wondering what fate might be in store for him. His uncle, the present Regent of the kingdom, he knew was not by nature a cruel or hard man, but he had no strength of character, and was easily influenced. Three different fates might be awaiting him. One might be the fate of Charles I of England . . . death on the scaffold . . . the second life-long captivity in the dungeon of a fortress . . . or the third . . . exile from his country in perpetuity . . . which of these was destined to fall upon him ?

He entered the first carriage, followed by General Silversparre and Staff Officers De la Grange and von Otter. Greiff mounted the box and took the reins, several carriages followed, with officers to act as guard, and an additional escort of five hundred cuirassiers with two officers in command.

The carriages rolled down the quadrangle with a noise like thunder and then on through the silent streets ; the town was quiet, as if nothing at all unusual had occurred. The few people who were about simply remarked to one another : " They are taking the King away."

And thus the carriages turned into the dreary road leading to Drottningholm. In the first all were silent, for none of the officers sitting there with the King could forget his embarrassing rôle of " gaoler," of which the clattering of horses' hoofs, indicating the near presence of a numerous mounted escort, was calculated continually to remind them.

The King himself sat so still that it almost appeared as if he had fallen asleep, if the occasional light thrown by the lamps had not revealed the fact that his eyes were wide open,

staring through the window as if expecting something ; in reality they were fixed upon the clouds and the stars.

Apparently, whatever it was the King had expected did not come to pass, and he heaved a deep sigh, and breathed hard as the horses stopped at the gates of the Palace.

The carriage had drawn up at one of the smaller side-entrances, not at the main gates where the King usually alighted, and General Silversparre requested him to get out ; but Gustaf Adolf sat obstinately silent in his corner, and made no attempt to rise.

"We alight here, Your Majesty," said Silversparre in resolute tones.

The King was about to make an angry reply, but desisted in time. Could it be the will of God that here, at Drottningholm, where no danger threatened the rebels, they should make him get out at a low back-door . . . only to heap insult upon and humiliate him, the KING ? If it were His will—he must submit, but the fact vexed and pained him exceedingly. However, he alighted, and accompanied by Silversparre, mounted the narrow steps which led up to the door ; they were coated with ice now, and Silversparre slipped and fell.

"It might have been better to have stopped at the usual entrance," said the King with his accustomed haughtiness and solemnity.

In the dead of night, and out there, no one would have believed that the weather during the last few days in town could have been mild, balmy, and springlike. The Mälar Lake was still ice-bound, the trees in the park leafless and bare, and the grass glistening with rime ; the wind was cold and biting as the King and those accompanying him made their way round the palace to the main entrance.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRISON HOUSE OF FATE

ONLY a short twelvemonth ago all the world had been wondering how the King could spend a whole winter at Gripsholm and not want to transfer his residence to the capital ; there was not one who had not complained of the cold and general discomfort of the place, but the King seemed impervious to both. He made out that it was a very pleasant place in which to stay, especially in winter ! Now he found himself there once more ! A train of sledges, nearly four miles long, was reported to have been seen coming along on the ice down the lake one morning from Drottningholm to Gripsholm. Only one halt had been made on the way, and after a drive lasting five and a half hours the King had safely arrived there, when, ascending the steps to the gaunt castle with his following of guards, he wondered how high up they were going to put him—possibly into King Eric's cell ; he would not have minded that. He always derived a certain gratification from the realisation of the hallucinations and gloomy forebodings of his imagination, even at their worst. For if premonitions of evil came true, might not anticipations of good come true likewise ?

But no ; he was not to inhabit King Eric's cell ; but was taken through the State bedroom to the council-chamber. These two rooms were to constitute his prison ; these, and more especially the latter, the Queen had always designated as the most weird and uncanny rooms in the castle, but never before had they appeared so cheerless and comfortless to him ; he glanced round the council-chamber which was to be his sleeping apartment, and it looked gruesome as he



entered it from the narrow passage from the State bedroom, where two soldiers were on guard, and perceived that here also two guards had been posted, one on either side of the door; the room looked like a prison cell. The dark, musty Gobelin hangings, which the Queen never could bear, were the same, but the furniture seemed much poorer than it used to be. A large screen had been placed in front of the bed, but no couch was to be seen; a piano, a chest of drawers, a few chairs, a mirror, and a couple of antique brackets besides a huge bare table in the centre constituted the *tout ensemble*. The King was much hurt at the thought that the better furniture to which he had been accustomed should have been replaced by such shabby articles as these.

The premature days of spring (March 12th and 13th) were succeeded by a very severe touch of winter. The cold made itself bitterly felt in that particular chamber, so singularly devoid of all comfort; and he, who was so accustomed to exercise and motion in the open air, closely confined to this room now, suffered keenly. Great gusts came through the crevices in roof and ceiling, and although a fire was supposed to be kept going on the hearth, the wood was so damp that it only hissed and smouldered and gave out but little heat. There was no inducement for the King to rise early as had been his wont. The days were long and dreary enough, so he often remained in bed until twelve or one o'clock in the day, sometimes even longer; not only because it was the only place where he could get a little warmth, but also because there he was immune from the inquisitive gaze of his "keepers"; they dared not intrude behind the screen.

Every four hours these men were relieved, and in the morning when he awoke, the King used to wonder what sort of men they were whose turn it was to watch at that time, and whether he should be able to bear the sight of them or not.

Therefore he generally inquired of them what sort of weather it was; by the tone of the answer he determined what kind of a guard he was likely to have. He seldom made any other remark, he had so infinitely much to occupy his mind and thoughts. It puzzled him rather why during the first few days of his

captivity his thoughts should be so constantly reverting to the days of his childhood at Drottningholm . . . perhaps it was that there his whole day had been spent in dread of the evening, as it was now. As a child at Drottningholm he had never been able to get over his terror of the evening gun, fired from the *Amphion*. Here at Gripsholm he lived in constant apprehension of wicked men, ghosts, and apparitions, and knew no peace. As soon as the shades of evening began to fall, he knew that a "horrible dread" would take hold of him, and the hours of daylight were spent in fear of that impending dread, and in trying to conceal that fear from those who were watching and spying upon him. Every now and then in his ceaseless wanderings within the confined space of his chamber an irresistible force impelled him to stop and listen to mysterious sounds emanating apparently from the fire-place. Ever and anon there was an uncanny rumbling in the chimney. Could some hired assassin be hidden within it? At other times there were sounds as of the flapping of gigantic wings. What monster would present itself to his distorted vision next, flying into the room? . . . Again, there were sighs and groans. Who uttered them? Good God! what was that last sound more weird than all the others put together? The King always turned sharply when near the hearth, but devoutly hoped that neither Colonel Silversparre, Chief of the watch, nor von Otter, who generally paid a short visit to him in the evening, nor the two "keepers" would notice his distraction. He would on those occasions have preferred to remain silent instead of discussing the weather or the state of his health, which were the only topics touched upon by these gentlemen. But he could not even sit still, being continually startled by fearful spectres of his imagination.

The high-pitched, gloomy chamber was very badly lighted too; only four wax tapers were kept burning when the King was up, two when he lay abed.

If he could have known the fate which finally awaited him, he could have been submissive; but the life of suspense among those who were his foes was almost beyond endurance. Maybe they contemplated making away with him, murdering him . . .

to leave the road to the throne clear. . . . For whom ? The Duke, his uncle, of course !

During the King's comparatively short life he had seen the fate of so many crowned heads that it was no wonder if, shut up and alone within those gloomy walls, he should think that his own might most likely be, not that of Charles I, neither exile nor imprisonment, but assassination ; a concatenation of dates but strengthened his impression.

He had been lodged at Gripsholm on March 24th ; the twenty-ninth would be the anniversary of the murder of his father, and he was firmly convinced that something would happen to himself on that day.

He lay awake the whole of the night between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh, and the "warders" could hear his sighs and heavy breathing. They listened if he would say anything, but he did not, and only his half-suppressed groans betrayed the mortal fear he was in, which nearly drove him mad. He prayed with all his heart that God would vouchsafe to him some inspiration of what he should do . . . the inspiration came. He remembered that there had been talk of his abdicating, that erstwhile scornfully rejected idea now strongly appealed to him as a means by which he might hope ere long to be allowed to quit this abode of horror. He argued that, having defended his rights to the uttermost, and having finally submitted to fate with a clear and unblemished conscience, he was now perfectly justified in casting off his responsibilities and renouncing his inheritance, seeing that his subjects had defected from him, that he had been ruthlessly bereft of liberty, and was being watched and spied upon as if he had been a common malefactor and a traitor to his country. That done, he thought he might speedily rejoin the Queen and his family, regain his freedom, be his own master, and go to Christiansfeld to settle quietly in that haven of rest.

"I will wait no longer than to-morrow," he said to himself. "I will tell Colonel Silversparre that I want an express messenger despatched to the Assembly of the States immediately with a verbal promise of abdication, on condition that the

Crown Prince be proclaimed King, and the Queen and the Royal children sent to join me."

Colonel Silversparre himself rode into the city betimes the following morning, bearing the King's message, but had not returned on the evening of March 28th, as the King had hoped and expected. Moreover, his fear and dread had got hold of him that night to such an alarming extent that he thought he should scarcely survive the time when the stroke of twelve should usher in the fateful twenty-ninth of the month.

As the clock solemnly struck the hour of midnight the King lay in his bed behind the screen, panting with terror as to what might be coming. His vivid imagination and weird fancies had driven all thoughts of sleep from his eyes; not that sleep would in any case have been possible, because of the noise and clatter made by the "keepers" when changing that night. Their spurs never seemed to have clinked so loud before, nor their swords to have been dragged so noisily across the floor. The men who had been on duty the previous night had shown but little consideration in disturbing the King and preventing his resting; it had required all his self-control not to give them a sound reprimand and bid them conduct themselves with proper decorum; but he had not done so; he was much too proud to address a word, under present conditions, to those he knew to be hostile to him. Occasionally he had spoken a few words to those of his guards whom he had known and liked before, but he had never made any request to them. Every night on retiring to bed he had made the same speech to one of the two, whether they seemed friendly or the reverse: "Will you be so good as to bid my valet come in?"

On the night in question, two subs of the former Swedish Guard had been told off to guard the King's chamber until half-past ten, and the noise had been made purposely to vex and annoy him; those sent to relieve them had pretty soon fallen into heavy slumbers, judging from their loud and vigorous snoring, and except for those porcine sounds all was silent as the clock struck twelve. The King counted each stroke as it fell, and when the last had died away an extraordinary thing occurred. An unprecedented gentle calm took possession of

his harassed breast . . . now he knew what he would do on that ominous March 29th ; he would take the final, irrevocable step. Trembling with cold, he left his bed ; the two keepers slept soundly, the one sitting huddled up in a chair, the other stretched at full length on the floor with the King's big Bible under his head for a pillow.

This dishonour to God and the King so irritated him that he very nearly yielded to the temptation of rousing the snorer with a violent box on the ear ; but he restrained himself, for, had he succumbed, he would not have been able to carry out his intentions. Shivering in his scanty night attire, he took one of the candles from the table and put it on the chest of drawers behind the screen ; then he fetched his writing-case and returned to bed.

Now he would prepare for the twenty-ninth ! His Act of Abdication should bear that date of harassing memories, and with the dawn he would write out a rough draft of the same, while all slept save himself. He wrapped the coverlet closely round him as he sat up writing on his knees by the feeble light of a wax candle blown hither and thither by an unavoidable draught. He felt as if an invisible spirit were whispering in his ear the words he was to write. Swiftly and without intermission his pen flew over the paper. He meant to copy it out himself and set his own Royal seal to it as soon as daylight came. And this was what he wrote :

“ In the name of God and the blessed Trinity . . .

“ WE, Gustaf Adolf, by the Grace of God, King of Sweden, Gotland, Wendland, etc. etc., Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, etc., desire to make it known that since WE were proclaimed King and with an aching heart were called upon to take possession of OUR heritage on the demise of a well-beloved and honoured father, seventeen years ago as on this day, being the twenty-ninth day of March, it hath ever been OUR strenuous desire to preserve and further the welfare and happiness of OUR ancient dominions and their people. As WE are no longer able to fulfil this OUR duty and obligation in accordance with OUR honest and pure purposes, and are powerless to keep order and quiet in the realm in a manner worthy of OURSELVES

and OUR subjects, WE consider it OUR bounden duty to renounce this OUR high calling, which WE do by this present writ, and of OUR own Will and Pleasure, to spend the rest of OUR days to the honour and glory of God. And herewith WE commend OUR loyal and faithful subjects to the care and protection of the Most High, wishing them a more prosperous and happy future both in their own persons and those who shall come after them. Yea, Fear GOD and honour the KING !

“ WE have conceived this same Act and committed it to paper with OUR own hand and in affirmation thereof sealed the same with OUR own Royal Seal.

“ Given at the Castle of Gripsholm, on the twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of OUR Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine.

“ GUSTAF ADOLF.”

The deed was done, and the King folded his hands and thanked God for the indescribable peace and calm which had entered his soul. Now he would soon be free again, free to gaze upon the beautiful works of God in Nature, where and when he listed and be once more united with the Queen. Of his own free will he had made over his inheritance, the Crown, to his son. He had not been *dethroned*, either by the Duke or by his people ; nay, Gustaf Adolf had abdicated *voluntarily*, as he had often thought of doing.

Whilst he was comforting himself with these consolatory reflections he ceased to mind the snoring, and soon fell into a calm and untroubled sleep.

When he rose the following morning Colonel Silversparre had returned, bringing the Duke's reply that it was not within *his* province to accept or decline the King's abdication ; it was a matter for the decision of the members of the General Assembly only ; also that the meeting with the Queen was not compatible with the strict keeping of guard over his Royal person which it was found necessary to maintain.

That answer killed all hope ! It implied continued isolation and imprisonment under the same strict vigilance and espionage, and renewed and increasing suspense and dread as to the ultimate fate of himself and his family.

The Queen had sent a letter to the King in which she said that,

although she was well enough to walk in the park, she remained a voluntary prisoner in her room at Haga and never went out, nor would she, so long as the King was prevented doing so. She further told him that when she first heard the sorrowful news of his captivity she quite expected to share it, but she intended to take none of her valuables with her, save that which she prized most in the world, the precious letter her dear lord had written to her, and which she carried about her day and night. The children, she said, had permission to roam about the park at Haga, but not beyond it; she had not availed herself of that concession, but *they* had played and romped in the grounds as usual. She thought Gustaf grew taller and stronger from day to day, and was said to be more like his mother than the little girls were, and she had discovered that the little Princess Cecilia was possessed of quite a charming voice, and could sing some little songs very sweetly and correctly, and "you will like to hear her sing when we have the great joy of meeting again." She had added that she besought the Duke daily to let her go to the King at Gripsholm. He had prophesied but too truly that the day would come when she would pray to be allowed to go there! The King at once sat down to answer her letter, telling her what he had done and what he had hoped for, also what a sorry reply he had received from the Duke.

He often stopped in his writing to listen to the curious noises from behind the fire-place, which were unusually distinct that night. At last he could bear it no longer, so he got up and began to pace up and down—in the narrow confines of the room at Gripsholm he had fallen into the odd habit of moving one foot alternately backwards and forwards, but always on the same spot! After five minutes of this exercise he sat down to the piano and tried to pick out the tune of one of the nursery songs which the Queen had told him the little Princess Cecilia sang so prettily; he succeeded fairly well, and played it over several times as well as his stiff, half-frozen hands would let him. As a child he had shown a great love for music, and the celebrated Ahlström had been his teacher. He thought, too, that he might be able to remember the march from "Andromache"

which he had played as a boy. Since that time he had neglected the piano, though he was fond of it still, and much appreciated the Queen's taste and proficiency on that instrument. If he tried he might manage the march, he thought, and he accomplished it brilliantly from beginning to end, and was both pleased and surprised to find how the music had helped him over his usual hours of dread. As a finish he played the little Princess Cecilia's nursery song over once more, then closed the piano and said to his "keepers": "Be good enough to send my valet in to me."

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The King was aware that the Members of the Assembly were to meet in solemn conclave on May 1st to advocate the cause of the revolutionaries, but he had not quite given up the hope that in the interval (one month) a few of his loyal subjects might come forward in defence of the legitimate cause. It could not be that the ancient Swedish loyalty to King and country had quite died out, and in the more remote villages and hamlets surely there must still exist brave, true-hearted men ready to risk life and goods for their Sovereign, and Gustaf Adolf feared to compromise these, his loyal adherents, if he gave up his rights; therefore, for the present he kept back his "Act of Renunciation," awaiting further developments from without.

But he waited in vain for comforting news, and was, at last, under the painful necessity of acknowledging to himself that none of his subjects seemed loyal and daring enough to attempt to offer the least opposition, so he forwarded the "Act of Abdication," which he had written on March 29th, to the Duke of Södermanland, President of the Realm.

Now his future appeared even more uncertain than heretofore . . . he could but wait, which he did day after day, as patiently as his turbulent, impatient disposition would allow. Many a mile did he tramp up and down his room during that fair month of May, and his intense longing to get out into the fresh air and see the first tender green of spring unfold among the trees was only equalled by the intensity of the suffering he

endured by the prolonged confinement within four gloomy walls. He began to understand that Queen Frederica had been quite right when she had said that this castle of Gripsholm was a dismal, depressing place, and he registered a silent vow that, once away from it and his own master, never again would he elect to live in a Gothic castle hung with the choicest Gobelin tapestries! But . . . was he *ever* going to leave it? And what awaited him then? . . . At any rate, he was firmly resolved that in case the Assembly should condemn him to the same fate as Charles I or Louis XVI, he would refuse to acknowledge them as his lawful judges, for the nation has no right to pronounce sentence on its ruler.

The turret clock struck the hour of midnight. Hark! What was that noise? It seemed to come from the roof. By the flicker of the candles the King perceived that his two guards were looking up at the ceiling, and thither he also directed his gaze. He stood there for some time, looking alternately at them and at the ceiling. At last, and with some hesitation, he asked one of them, whom he knew: "Is there anything to be seen up there?" The man shook his head and replied: "No, Your Majesty; what should there be to see?"

"Who can tell?" said the King, with a sigh. "But there seems to have been something there."

The continued rolling noise made itself heard again, more distinctly than before. The King appeared to be standing exactly under it.

"I shall climb up into the loft and search when I am 'off,'" said one of the guards.

The King shook his head and said: "There is no need to search."

Again the noise began, though it now seemed more distant. It was dreadful to be in constant expectation of its returning and an icy chill crept down the King's spine. Presently the noise came nearer again, and that so loud that the windows rattled. Gustaf Adolf said not a word, but he raised himself behind the screen and opened his Bible, though the thin, trembling hands were hardly able to hold the large volume open. He tried to decipher the print. His lips moved in prayer.

Still the noise continued, sometimes near, almost overhead, and as if the cracked ceiling were about to fall, sometimes farther off. Only half an hour after midnight did it cease.

The next morning, the guard who had offered to go on a voyage of discovery the preceding night and to find the cause of the horrible noise, entered and said to the King: "Now I know the cause of the thunderous noise Your Majesty and ourselves heard in the night. I went up to the loft early this morning, just over this room, and there discovered an ancient, curious wheel which must at some time or another have formed part of some theatrical scenery. I feel convinced that some one amused himself with trundling this wheel to and fro, causing it to make that awful noise. When I rolled it up there, of course the sound was rather different, not so loud; I tried it, and I am certain it was that."

"Why should officials or soldiers or anyone about the Castle want to amuse themselves in such an unbecoming and idiotic way as that?"

"They probably wished to frighten somebody," replied the first speaker, not without hesitation.

"It would be most heartless and inconsiderate in anyone to wish to scare his fellows in that manner," answered the King. "I cannot believe it. I quite believe you saw the wheel, but I cannot think that it could have been used for the purpose of frightening anyone. All the same, it was kind of you to take the trouble to go up there, though it was no use, for you could not see the thing that was there in the night . . . it was weird, and I cannot fathom it."

Then he sighed and resumed his tramp.

On May 29th, a bright, sunshiny day, although a fire was still kept up, the King had visitors at Gripsholm. Colonel Silversparre, Colonel Carl von Otter, and the two former adjutants, Gustaf von Otter and Reutercrona. He knew or could guess the object of their visit, but strove to appear outwardly calm when Silversparre began to speak. The King's heart beat so violently, and the hot blood came in such a rush to his head, that he could hardly grasp a word.

He had received his visitors standing, and he remained

in that posture, resting his elbow on the high table. When Silversparre mentioned that he had received a document signed by the Earl Marshal and Commons, and that he had brought with him two copies, one of which to be retained by the King, the latter suddenly sat down in the high, elaborately carved arm-chair with as much dignity and hauteur as if it had been the throne ! The officers present thought the King's demeanour singularly cold and indifferent, though he was deathly white and his lips twitched nervously.

He might have been going to make some observation, but he could not utter a word for some time. At last he said in a haughty tone of command : " You may read the document to me now, Colonel Silversparre."

Silversparre stood in front of the King, with the paper in his hand. Slowly he unfolded it and began to read, the King keeping his eyes riveted upon him all the time.

It proved a difficult task even for that hard, heartless man to have to read out the charges brought against Gustaf Adolf by the Swedish people, to that very Sovereign himself, sitting there impassive and motionless like some heathen deity carved in stone, fixing puzzled and reproachful eyes on the reader and looking as though he saw some spirit invisible to the rest.

First came the long and wearisome introduction, next the accusation that Gustaf Adolf IV, until the present time King and Ruler of the Kingdom of Sweden, had caused the rupture of the peaceable relations of that kingdom with all foreign Powers by hostilities of several years' duration and of no advantage to the country ; hostilities which might easily have been avoided and might often have been put a stop to entirely, without loss or sacrifice of prestige, and the consequences of which had been most disastrous to the country."

The King did not stir nor take his eyes off Silversparre, who tried hard to avoid the searching, penetrating gaze. Those eyes seemed to say : " Ah, they don't know . . . they talk ignorantly." Silversparre then read a weird description of the wretched condition of the kingdom under Gustaf Adolf's reign ; how agriculture and farming had suffered, the labourers having been swept from the land ; how trade and commerce had

diminished, how internal communication and the transport of provisions and food-stuffs had been hampered, and the working of mines and minerals reduced to a minimum; how business of all kinds had been lamed, the national debt increased by several million crowns, and oppressive burdens laid upon the inhabitants, besides the unjust taxes levied far in excess of the means of the people."

The King continued listening to these dreadful charges with the same far-off look and without any perceptible change of expression; always perplexed and reproachful, his eyes fixed on the officer who had suffered himself to be chosen for the rôle of accuser against his Sovereign.

Next Silversparre read the paragraph containing the minor charges, such as the fate of the territorial army, the loss of the German provinces and that of the valuable Grand Duchy of Finland, forming one-third of the kingdom.

The officers thought the King sat there so quietly, listening as if none of these things concerned him in the very least, or that, perhaps, he was positive in his own mind that he had been perfectly right in unhesitatingly and persistently refusing to make any overtures of peace. He maintained his haughty and dignified carriage, but Silversparre's voice shook strangely, though he tried to make it steady as he continued to read in harsh, forced tones: "On these premises we now renounce our fealty to our former King and Ruler, Gustaf Adolf IV, King of Sweden, Gotland, etc. etc., Heir-Apparent of Denmark and Norway, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein and the Marshes, Lord of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, etc., and declare him and the heirs male of his body begot, now and hereafter, debarred from the throne of Sweden for all time."

A long, painful silence ensued.

"How, when, and where was this document framed?" asked the King, in the usual abrupt tone he used when he desired to hear details of any new report. Rising from his seat, he added, with a slight touch of sarcasm, "Fortunately for my peace of conscience, this Act of Deposition was preceded by my own voluntary Act of Abdication."

His tone and manner were decidedly irritating, and Silver-

sparre answered brusquely : " The Assembly considered that it was superfluous for the King to renounce rights which he had abused, and which were no longer his."

Gustaf Adolf's face burnt like fire.

" Is there no one who will raise his voice in defence of the rights of the Crown-Prince ? " he asked sternly.

" When Count Mannerheim's proposal to renounce the oath of fealty and obedience, as it is worded in this document, was moved, it was met with an unanimous ' Aye, aye.' "

The King gave a slight smile of contempt, but said nothing.

" I must now request Your Majesty to signify on this document that the contents thereof have been duly communicated to Your Majesty. I am under orders to leave the second copy with Your Majesty."

The King paced up and down in deep thought for a while, whilst the two adjutants fetched a table, artistically wrought in ivory and inlaid with tortoiseshell, from the room adjoining. The top of the table represented a hunting scene and two youths, one of whom bore a torch towards a temple ; the King glanced at it in passing, and said : " A very fitting table for the occasion ! "

Silversparre laid the document on the table and brought pen and ink. After a time the King wrote in the space indicated : " I, the KING, have this day received from the hands of the Earl-Marshal, General Isaac Lars Silversparre, a document similar to this present one, receipt of which I hereby acknowledge, with deepest sorrow, but in full consciousness of innocence.

" GUSTAF ADOLF."

" Castle of Gripsholm, May 29th, 1809."

The King had written rapidly, but it took him a long time to make the cross he usually appended to his signature ; this time he wished it to be particularly clear and large.

It was done at last, and he rose from his seat, after which the three officers added their names as having witnessed the signature.

" To what end am I to retain the copy of this Act ? " the King inquired, making no move to take the paper Silversparre, with a profound and deferential bow, presented to him. " You



GUSTAF ADOLF IV
(COLONEL GUSTAFSON)
AT THE AGE OF 40

Colonel Silversparre conducted her in respectful silence to the apartments set aside for her and her little ones.

"The King is still asleep, and it would be a pity to disturb him," he remarked to the Queen; but she replied that she was inclined to think the meeting with his family, after such a long separation, would do him more good than hours of sleep. "So go and wake him up at once," she said.

Some time naturally elapsed ere she and the children could be admitted to his presence, for he had to complete his toilet first. The Queen knew, of course, that he was still being closely guarded, both by night and day, for which reason she could not enter his apartment before being called, nor would he have approved of her doing so. The Royal children had never seen their mother so wildly excited as while waiting now, and she gave them strict injunctions as to how they should behave when summoned.

"Remember, Gustaf, not to ask your poor father, as you asked *me* a day or two ago, what you had done, and why you could never be King; and you, Sophia and Amelia, are not to tease Gustaf, and say, 'A fine King *you'd* make,' as I *have* heard you say; your father would be very angry with you if he were to hear that; and mind, you are not to laugh and chatter when you are with him, but you must be gentle and quiet, and hold your little tongues; then, directly you see him, you must run and throw your arms about his neck and kiss him, and Cecilia must sing her little songs to him; and nobody is to cry, remember."

"Nor you either, mamma," sagely observed the Princess Sophia.

"I am so thankful and delighted to be here at last, and to see him again, that I cannot help crying."

"Does papa know that the Duke of Södermanland is going to be proclaimed King, and that *he* can't be King any longer, and you Queen, and none of us any longer the Royal Family?" asked Prince Gustaf.

"You may be sure he knows that; it has not been kept secret from him," replied the Queen. "But we won't talk about it and make him sorry . . . we are all agreed about that, are we not?"

"Yes, oh yes, mamma!" cried the children in chorus.

"But as long as we are here at Gripsholm we shall not have him all to ourselves as we used to do," said the Queen. "It is always nice to be with him, whether he is up or in bed, and we shall have to be very careful what we talk about, so that we may not do him any harm. We shall have to be very patient, too; but we must thank God that we have at last been allowed to come to him."

Presently Silversparre appeared, to take the Queen and the children in to see the King; he made the two guards withdraw for the time being into an outer room, so that nothing should mar this touching meeting. The Queen gave a start when she beheld the King no longer in uniform; she had not known that he had left it off. He did not look like himself without his decorations or the broad ribbon of the Seraphim, and in a black cloth coat. She called to mind the words he had written in a letter to her directly after his abdication: "I was not meant to wear an earthly crown, but a heavenly one!"

The next minute she had thrown herself sobbing into his arms.

He said no word, but the big tears rose to his eyes as he stroked the Crown-Prince's fair curls and kissed the Princesses, and when the little Princess Cecilia, with a frightened look at her father and a half-stifled sob, began to sing her little nursery rhymes; she had hardly finished when the King sat down and commenced to write a letter.

"To whom have you got to write in such a hurry?" asked the Queen, who sat by his side.

"To my uncle, the new King," her Consort replied. "I am writing to tell him how happy I am at the reunion with my wife and children, and to thank him for his kindness in not begrudging me that happiness."

The King drew the signet ring (an heirloom from his late father) from his finger . . . the Queen had never seen him without it since she had come into the country, and knew that he was always in the habit of using it.

"I shall send this ring to my uncle as a token of gratitude for this great happiness; it was in his possession all the years

during which he was Regent and I his ward, so I am going to give it to him in the hope that he will one day leave this precious jewel to the one in whose possession we would both fain see it."

He bent down and imprinted a fervent kiss on his son's brow ; then he went on with his letter.

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Every afternoon the King was allowed to take the air with his wife and family in the small castle garden, within high walls ; but the two guards were often present to watch him, and on the ramparts a sentinel walked up and down, marking the King and Queen's slightest movements or the Royal children's quiet play. There was not much fresh or invigorating air to be got in that confined space ; still there were trees and flowers, and it was real enjoyment to the King to wander about with the blue sky over his head instead of the dingy ceiling of the gloomy abode in which he had been so long immured. It was a perfect "Garden of Eden," he had remarked to the Queen the first time he had been out with her, when they were discussing plans for their life in the future. Not yet had the fate of the Royal Family been decided upon ; neither King nor Queen had the remotest idea as to the time when they should be permitted to leave their prison and their country, nor whether the new King intended to keep Prince Gustaf as his heir to the throne, or if the people would choose him as such.

Queen Frederica spoke in very subdued tones, so that the guard should not hear what she said every time the King in his perambulations stopped by the seat on which she was resting. If need be, she was willing to part with her son, but it would be pain and grief to her. When the King expatiated upon his ardent hopes to be allowed to take up his residence at Christiansfeld, the Queen felt that, although it would be extremely distasteful for her to settle entirely among Moravians, she must try to be content ; and when he dwelt at length upon the serene days to which he looked forward there, and spoke of the rest *he* would enjoy, who had never tasted rest or quiet throughout his life, Queen Frederica would retort with a glad smile : "As

long as you and the children are happy, I shall be happy too."

If only they could have their liberty soon back ; if only the King and Gustaf could have been set free ! The little Princesses could play about freely and do as they liked ; not so Prince Gustaf, who was watched as closely as his father. The Queen lived with the King in his apartments, the children's rooms were on another floor, and every time Prince Gustaf went down to see his parents a guard followed close upon his heels. At first he was rather proud of that fact, and boasted of his importance to his sisters, but after a while it palled upon him, and he was cross because he could not go beyond the tiny "plot," as the King now called the place he had once christened a "Garden of Eden," and which both he and the Crown-Prince thought grew smaller and smaller every day and more like a prison court.

Prince Gustaf began to be envious of the Princesses' liberty, and he and Princess Sophia put their little heads together to concoct a plan by which he could elude the vigilance of his custodians and give them the slip and have a "real good time" in the woods adjoining the park. Now there happened to be in the castle a spiral staircase leading into the quadrangle ; the Princess Sophia, having her brother by the hand, had already made several attempts to get to the bottom of this staircase, but had always been caught and ignominiously brought back.

It was a fine afternoon in August, and Prince Gustaf and his sister were just going to join their parents in the "meadow," as the King and Prince designated the rural spot which the Queen and Princesses, by way of compliment, had named the "Flower Garden," or the "Pleasaunce." The Prince and Princess Sophia had long been closeted together, discussing in pretty audible whispers a charming plan devised by the young lady for her brother's escape, which plan was to be carried out that very day.

The Princess Amelia was in the secret, but was too nervous to take any active part, and the baby Princess Cecilia was too small and too great a chatterbox to be taken into confidence.

The officer on guard was waiting for the Prince, who said he must just run into his sister's room for a minute to fetch the little gun he had left there. The guard waited and waited. Meanwhile, in her room, the Princess Sophia had noiselessly opened the door leading to the staircase, and the two children ran nimbly down it, hand in hand. When they had reached the floor on which the King's apartments were situated they saw a sentinel on duty, but as they walked past him quite slowly, and gave him a condescending nod, he was so taken aback by their unusual affability that it never occurred to him to stop them ; this act of condescension had been a premeditated little "ruse" on the part of the eight-year-old Princess. On they went as fast as they could down the next flight, where another dangerous sentinel was posted . . . but the same ruse did for him. At last they were safely at the bottom, and the Princess opened the door which led out into the yard. In breathless haste they ran out and hid behind a tree. How long they crouched there they could not have told. Presently they heard Prince Gustaf's guard and the Princess' governess loudly calling them, but they whispered to each other, "Don't let us answer ; don't let us answer !—and," added Prince Gustaf, "if they cannot find me I shall be free !"

The King and Queen had not yet come out. They were standing at one of the windows overlooking the Mälar Lake, which lay clear and calm before them like a mirror ; they were watching a fishing boat which had been about there for several days.

"If only we were on board of one of those little boats, and could go where we liked without first having to crave permission," said the Queen.

"Then I should straightway go to Christiansfeld, where they will not let me go," replied the King, with a deep sigh. He could not take his eyes off the little fishing craft which lay in a small cove below the walls.

"Yes ! why may we not go away ? why are we kept here ?" said the Queen, stretching out her arms as though she would like to use them as wings wherewith to fly away.

"I cannot think of any more irritating excuse than the pretext that our revenues must be definitely fixed before

we are set at liberty, especially as you have so often given them the assurance that you considered your own private income, and the sum you inherited from your late father, sufficient for us. Besides, it is far better to be content with less than to be under any obligation to the new King; it would have been another matter if he had wished to keep Gustaf and make him his successor, but as he has chosen another already. . . .”

“Long ago I wrote and said that I required no assistance for the future, the munificent gift the nation gave to my late father, which formed part of my inheritance, being fully adequate to meet our needs. I also offered the country, in its present urgent need, the sum of twelve thousand crowns in gold, which represents the capital of the gift I just now referred to,” replied the King, looking far away across the Mälar. “Could I do more? Then why are we not allowed to go free? But perhaps I had better write again, and say that, a report having reached me that the heads of the Government are desirous of increasing my private income by an annual subsidy, I should be willing to accept the same. I should refer to what has already been said about it as my reason for no longer refusing. If further questions should arise I shall make the proposal which seems the only feasible one to me—that is, that the amount of the said subsidy shall be wholly and solely devoted to the education of my children, as a token that the Swedish nation still preserves some sort of regard for these children, and it will teach *them* gratefully to remember their native land.”

“Write, oh *do* write just what you said; it will do them good to hear it . . . but . . . do you see that the fishing-boat has come a good deal nearer? Supposing somebody had thought of giving us our freedom . . . that way! . . . Oh, what is it?—what has happened? GUSTAF? . . .” cried the Queen alarmed.

The Crown-Prince’s guard stood on the threshold, looking very scared.

“I had hoped to find His Royal Highness here,” he said.

“Prince Gustaf? . . . but where *is* he?”

“Prince Gustaf and Princess Sophia have disappeared. I

have sought them everywhere in vain, and called the Prince for several minutes, and Mademoiselle Panhuys is calling the Princess, and looking for her all over the place. . . . I thought possibly their Royal Highnesses might have come in here”

Meanwhile the two little adventurers stood shaking and quaking behind the tree ; they heard themselves being called, and the voices came nearer and nearer ; now they would be discovered and . . . taken back ! And a few moments later they *were* found and taken in to the King and Queen.

“ I shall have to be more vigilant for the future,” said the guard sternly to Prince Gustaf, as he went up the steps with the boy to the Queen’s apartments. She was weeping hysterically, and tenderly embraced both the young truants ; but the King, standing in the middle of the room, gave the little culprits such a look that they were wellnigh frightened out of their wits. . . . Were they going to have a whipping ? . . . No ! never in all their lives had they had a more gentle rebuke from their father.

“ You must never alarm your mother like that again,” he said ; “ she has been very troubled about you, and thought you were lost, and I, too, have been”

The King stopped abruptly. The Queen saw that he was thinking of the small fishing-boat, and what a boon liberty would be to a captive ! He had too keen a sense of justice to reprimand his son severely for attempting what he himself would gladly have attempted had there been a chance.

It was a most beautiful evening ; the Royal couple stood by the open window and looked over the Mälar and its bonnie green banks with inexpressible longing.

“ There are heaps of boats this evening, and they are coming nearer,” said the King slowly and sadly to his Consort. “ I fancy I can hear them singing . . . singing : ‘ Here’s to the health of our Gustaf ! ’ ”

“ Are not the masts of the foremost boats decorated with wreaths of flowers, or do my eyes deceive me ? ” remarked the Queen.

“ Yes, they are,” replied the King, trembling with excite-

ment ; “ and I can hear singing, beautiful singing, on the lake, as once before in far-off days here at Gripsholm.”

“ Yes, oh yes, and they are singing to us—they still love us—I knew it, oh, I knew it . . . have I not often said so ? ”

By this time the boats had come immediately under the window where the King and Queen were standing, and a loud cheer, as in time gone by, greeted the Royal captives. Gustaf Adolf leant forward, and took off his tricorne to the people in the boats.

At the same moment the sentry pacing below fired off his rifle, but he aimed, not at the boats, but at the window above, and the bullet whizzed far over the head of the King. The Queen sank into a chair and fainted with fright.

The whole castle was in confusion, and after a while Colonel Silversparre entered the Royal apartments. He was in a more disagreeable temper than usual, as he said : “ I have come to inform Your Majesty that the sentry who so clumsily fired off his rifle has been placed under arrest. I would, however, at the same time, call Your Majesties’ attention to the fact that all outsiders approaching the castle walls will be liable to be shot ; also, it will be my duty, at once, to send a full report of what has occurred to Stockholm.”

“ I presume I may rely on your saying a good word for the fishermen, Colonel Silversparre, that no harm may come to them for wishing to show their captive King . . . ” he hesitated a few seconds, seeking to find the right word, “ to show their captive King a little kindly regard.”

A few days later Silversparre informed Gustaf Adolf that an order had been received from Stockholm forbidding their Majesties hereafter, for the sake of their own safety, to show themselves at any window overlooking the lake.

From that day all boats seemed to have been spirited away ; a few sails only were visible on the distant horizon ! The King could not suppress a groan when he observed what a wide berth was given by the boats to that dangerous and terrible Gripsholm. Who could tell when the sentry would be ordered to fire, or how far the bullets might carry ?

The summer had fled, and the dreary autumn season was fast approaching, and everything at Gripsholm became correspondingly gloomier. The trees were shedding their leaves, the wind tossed up the water of the lake into white, frothy waves, and the sky was of a leaden grey, with storm-clouds driving swiftly across it. With every day that passed the King's longing for freedom increased, and he dreaded the long nights when, with the coming of dark, he should again hear those mysterious sounds from ceiling, hearth, and corridor; he tried his best to conceal his alarm from the Queen. At first, when in those long evenings she had sat down to the piano and improvised warlike marches and peaceful melodies, he had forgotten to listen for those weird sounds. But of late the Queen had taken to doing fancy work in the evening; she had quite a girlish pleasure in finishing the waistcoat she had begun for the King at Haga; she was bent upon doing every stitch of it herself, although the making of the buttonholes cost the unpractised fingers a considerable amount of trouble, and the silence which reigned in the room during this particular and important business naturally fell upon the King's highly-strung nerves, and caused him to hear those wretched sounds with painful distinctness. Although he said nothing about what he heard, he could see by the Queen's heightened colour and scared looks that she had heard the same, and was endeavouring to hide her fears in order not to alarm *him*; the climax was reached one night early in October.

At three o'clock in the morning the King had been disturbed by a peculiar kind of whistling or hissing in his left ear. He tried to lie still so as not to frighten the Queen, but the whistling continued, and very soon she also was awakened by the sounds pervading the chamber; she put out her hand to grip that of the King.

"Do you hear it?" she whispered. "Do you hear it?"

"Yes, yes, I hear it;" and they lay, both of them trembling with fear and listening to the noises, which presently came to a sudden end . . . only to begin again, worse than before—whistling, howling, panting, sighing, and groaning, enough to drive anyone frantic with fear.

When it ceased for a moment the Royal couple could no longer bear to lie quiet, so they rose, the Queen wrapping her long *robe-de-chambre* over her nightdress, the King throwing on a fur coat, and thus attired they sought refuge in Baron von Otter's quarters, telling him what had taken place. Their guards had heard nothing, which led to the inference that the two men must have been sound asleep; but from that date the King and Queen occupied a different apartment for sleeping.

That awful night, which had been much like the night of horror which had preceded the accident to the Queen's father and his subsequent decease, was the night of October 7th, the anniversary of the birth of Charles XIII, and Gustaf Adolf considered it to have been a very special foreshadowing of unusual events shortly to come to pass. He told the Queen, and she was of the same opinion. As she heard him speak, and saw the look in his eyes, she could no longer harbour any manner of doubt. Her one wish and longing was that he might be able to predict when they were likely to be permitted to leave this haunted and fearsome abode.

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The King was offering his arm to the Queen; she looked up at him, and with a funny little grimace, remarked: "This is an odd sort of ceremony, methinks!"

"I suppose it just *had* to be," answered the King in low tones, as, followed by the two guards, the Royal couple entered the Hall of Assembly.

Inside they were received by the officers deputed to Gripsholm by the Four Estates for the purpose of compiling an inventory of the jewels, belonging to the Crown, of which the deposed King and Queen might still be in possession; also to make a list of the personal belongings of the Royal Family, such as ready cash, land, furniture, books, wearing-apparel, plate, linen, etc. That list had already been made out and checked; now the King and Queen were to point out which of the ornaments were their own private property and which the property of the Crown. A table, covered with green baize,

stood in the middle of the hall, and the jewels and decorations were laid out upon it ; big "stars" of various orders, and insignia in diamonds, snuff-boxes set with pearls and precious stones, watches, miniatures, rings with large single stones, necklaces of ropes of pearls, and a quantity of loose, unset stones. They shone and sparkled wonderfully in the light of the tapers which had had to be lighted this dull October day.

The King and Queen took their seats on the two arm-chairs placed, for their convenience, close to the table. The King was in black, the Queen entirely in white. The Gentlemen-Deputies took up a respectful position near the table, and the Secretary read out the inventory and checked off the articles in order.

It may well be surmised that the Deputies felt more than slightly embarrassed during these proceedings, especially when they had to request His Majesty to point out his own property, which he did with some hesitation.

"This," he said, "the Star of the Order of the Seraphim, belongs to me, having been left to me by the Will of my late father of blessed memory ; that decoration is also mine, as well as those other objects over there ; the remainder, mounted with precious gems, are the property of the Crown."

The King's thin hand looked thinner than ever as he pointed to several rings, miniatures, scarf-pins, watches, and snuff-boxes which certainly *were* his personal property ; many of them could be proved to have been bequests from his father.

Now and again the Deputies would refer to their lists for verification, but the King was always found to be right, so that no questions arose save in the case of an unset diamond of immense value, which they were anxious to retain as Crown property, but which the King was able to prove, beyond a doubt, to have belonged to his father, and to have been specially left to the "only" son.

The Queen's turn came next ; she could not maintain the same outwardly calm demeanour as the King. Her ornaments were of more intrinsic value in her estimation than his, being mostly personal gifts and souvenirs. She had not the talent of successfully concealing, when pride demanded it, under an icy exterior the rage that was seething within. She had

all along been admiring the King's haughty self-control, but her small white hand trembled visibly as she pointed excitedly to a magnificent parure of brilliants which sent out magic, prismatic rays.

"That is the parure my husband gave me when I came to Sweden. *It is mine*," she said.

But the examiners interposed that there were certain gems belonging to the Crown in the parure; the King confirmed their statement, the Queen's wedding parure being subsequently discovered somewhere else.

"That set of precious stones was a present from the King to me when the Crown-Prince was born, but how am I to know that you will not say some of these, too, are 'Crown jewels'?" said the Queen again.

"No, they are not," replied the King.

With a steadier voice she continued: "On the same occasion the Queen-Mother also made me a present of this ring with the one large, single stone, and gave me yonder necklace when I arrived at Drottningholm as a bride."

The Deputies and examiners bowed deferentially.

"That brooch was given to me by the King when the Princess Sophia was born."

"Private property of Her Majesty," added Gustaf Adolf in a calm voice, by way of endorsement.

"That necklace of pearls was a present from my husband on the birth of our second son, the Grand Duke of Finland;" as she said this the Queen's eyes filled with tears.

"I ought not to have given her pearls—pearls are an emblem of tears," the King thought to himself; aloud he said, "The *absolute* property of the Queen."

"On that occasion also my mother-in-law presented me with this locket," said Frederica, pointing to the ornament in question; "and that diamond pin was given me by the King when the Princess Amelia was born."

"Also Her Majesty's indisputable personal property," put in the King again.

"On the Princess Cecilia's birthday the King sent me this ring."

"The stone in it forms part of the Crown jewels, however," said one of the Deputies.

"It does," gravely assented the King; "the financial condition of the country at that time did not allow of my purchasing others."

With a sweet and winning smile the Queen said: "I do not mind giving up the ring. . . . I have my little Princess."

Then she pointed to a perfect parure of Siberian amethyst and precious stones, lying on the green baize, "That is most certainly my *very* own . . . no doubt some of the gentlemen present will remember that His Majesty ordered these stones in Russia, and that the setting was done at Stockholm; it created quite a sensation at the time."

The Deputies bowed. . . . There was no disputing the Queen's right to *that* parure.

"This bracelet?"

"Crown jewels, Your Majesty."

"That tiara?"

"Crown jewels, Your Majesty."

"Those charms yonder?"

"Crown jewels, Your Majesty."

"And this ring?" asked the Queen, pointing to the keeper on her left hand.

"Most undoubtedly Her Majesty's own particular property," interpolated the King with solemnity.

Then came the items belonging to the Crown-Prince Gustaf. The King was answerable for these.

It was all over at last, and their Majesties rose to return to their apartments. The King had already offered his arm to the Queen, and she had wrapped her white scarf more closely round her, when Colonel Hjerta, one of the Deputies, suddenly stepped forward and said: "Your Majesty's pardon, but in the ready cash account Your Majesty omitted to mention what other available means Your Majesty is now possessed of at Gripsholm."

With ill-concealed wrath the Queen thought: "It is like compounding with one's creditors!" But the King reflected for a second or two; then, with his admirable straightforward-

ness and honesty, and the imperturbable calm he had evinced throughout the whole humiliating transaction, he said : " I have at the present time only six hundred riksdaler in cash, besides seventy-five Swedish and twelve Dutch ducats. With the exception of the sum I named before, and the money in the hands of Count Ugglas, I possess nothing. The Count has had the management of my privy purse, and I have no investments in any other country."

He stopped a few minutes, and then continued : " For my own satisfaction, and to prevent any misconceptions which might arise among the assembly, I am prepared, if required, to state on oath that matters stand precisely as I have said."

The hot blood had mounted to his temples as he spoke, but he had himself marvellously well in hand, and with a slight inclination of the head to the Deputies he again offered his arm to the Queen, and together they left the hall.

For more than an hour after gaining their apartments the King was silent, busying himself with sorting and turning over various papers and documents, laying aside some and affixing his seal to others. In the afternoon, when this business was over, His Majesty was graciously pleased to permit his Excellency Count von Fersen, Baron von Lagerheim, with the Deputies, etc., to take a respectful leave of their Majesties. As they were about to go the King called them back, and said : " Gentlemen, being most anxious honourably and honestly to declare anything at this time in my possession which might be considered to represent some pecuniary value, I beg to state that it has just recurred to my memory that Superintendent Fredenheim, now deceased, received out of my own private fortune a gift of two hundred riksdaler for the development of a new silver mine in Westermanland, for the which he handed me this receipt, dated August 28th, 1799." As he said this, he took from the table a small folded paper which he handed to the members of the Commission for examination, then he went on : " If the heirs of the said Fredenheim desire to do so, they are at liberty to exchange this receipt for an agreement I wrote at the time, and which will be found among the papers of the deceased ; here are also various other papers containing an

account of the way in which my fortune has been expended," giving a bundle of papers to Silversparre as he spoke.

The Commission bowed, and were again about to withdraw when the King motioned to them once more to remain in their places. In grave and solemn tones, and with a bearing of pride and dignity which greatly impressed his hearers, he said :

"Before we separate, gentlemen, and in reply to sundry questions put by Friherre Hjerta, I should wish the Deputation to be fully convinced that I have not the remotest desire or intention to conceal anything respecting my private personal income, or any action of mine which ought to be known to the King. Therefore I can but repeat that I am willing to confirm the statements I have made on oath. Among my papers will be found some to which I have appended my seal; these I herewith confide to the care of His Excellency Count Fersen, with the request that he will himself deliver the same into the hands of His Majesty, King Charles." Then Gustaf Adolf made the usual inclination with his head which betokened that the audience was at an end, and this time the Deputation were allowed to bow themselves out unhindered.

After their departure the King sat for a while lost in thought; he and the Queen were alone for once, the guard having left the room for the time being.

"It felt as if you were distributing legacies and bequests whilst you were still alive," exclaimed the Queen. "Now, surely, they might let us go in peace."

"It had not struck me in that light," remarked the King, "but you are quite right; it was rather as if I *were* dead or dying, and had to render an account to those coming after me. But the poor dead man has also gained something."

She looked at him in perplexity as he began his usual restless promenade, and said : "The dead have no earthly possessions; even the name they bore in their lifetime is no longer theirs . . ."

"True enough," cried the Queen; "but I had not even thought of what name we should go by when we leave Sweden."

"But I have; I shall call myself 'Count of Gottorp,' and if, by some means or other, I should be deprived of that name, or if I should, for any reason at any time, wish to drop it, I shall

simply be known as 'Colonel Gustafson.' No one can have anything to say against that; the rank of Colonel in the Swedish Army I have always held, and am I not in very truth 'the son of Gustaf'? So far, no one has denied me the right of claiming to be my father's son, the inheritance of his name no one can take from me. . . . If they could, no doubt they would do so, knowing that the rest has been comparatively easy to bear."

The Queen sat looking at the King, her hands idly folded on her lap. His eyes were bright, and a disdainful smile curled his lips; never had she seen that smile before.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE KING AN EXILE

THE Queen undertook to look after the fire in the King's apartment herself. In the course of that chill and stormy autumn she might frequently, during the day, be seen kneeling in front of the open hearth with shavings, paper and sticks, striking sulphur-sticks on a flint and blowing, with all the breath she had, to coax the damp wood to catch. She had never in her life attempted to make a fire before, and at first she had thought it rather fun, but now it had begun to pall upon her, though she knew that the fires *she* made seemed to give out a far greater amount of heat than those made by the servants; the service altogether was not as it had been when the King's favour or disfavour had been the incentive.

Large fires were needed to contend with the cold and to drive out the damp. What was to become of them, supposing they should be detained in this gloomy prison throughout the horrible winter? It seemed not unlikely, for the Queen had overheard the Commander saying something about its soon being time to think of preparing winter quarters for the "Royalties." How would the King and the children ever be able to stand the cold and damp? The Queen dare not think of the future, and at the present moment she was fully occupied with her endeavours not to let the fire go down or the draughty room get colder; yet, in spite of all her coaxing, poking, and blowing, the logs only smouldered sulkily, and there was not much warmth to be got out of them. Meanwhile the King paced up and down in his room, and the Queen sometimes wondered whether he would leave the prints of his feet on the

floor as King Eric had done during his incarceration in the room above.

Every time Colonel Silversparre went to Stockholm they wondered whether he would bring them tidings of speedy release on his return . . . but these never came, so the Queen had to keep on coaxing her fires ! Probably her increasing skill in that direction would be called into requisition throughout the long, dreary winter months, perhaps not only *this* winter, but future winters also, till their hair would be grey with the years unless a merciful death came to their release.

So time went on slowly but surely, and it was now the beginning of December ! The Governor of Gripsholm was absent in Stockholm, but expected to return on the evening of the fifth ; would he have any news to communicate this time ? Yes ! He *had* news ! But though they had been wearily waited for day after day, yea, hour after hour, the effect was overpowering when at last they did come ; it was the reaction of hope long-deferred.

Betimes the following morning the Royal Family were to hold themselves in readiness to start for Karlscrona ; a royal frigate would be waiting there to convey them away from Sweden. The necessary preparations were to be made at once, this very night ! All Gripsholm was in commotion ; the King and Queen could hardly collect themselves, but he was inexpressibly glad to leave that prison, and she was equally delighted, though her head was in a whirl at the suddenness and hurry of preparation ; she was also much distressed to hear that the members of the Royal Family were not to travel together, but she said nothing of her trouble to the King, who had plenty of his own to think about.

The Governor had informed him that General Skjöldebrand was to accompany him on the journey, and that he would arrive at Gripsholm in good time to fetch the King, which information much perturbed the Queen, who feared she and the children might be left behind. This apprehension left her no peace. The children had been put to bed early, but were roused at five o'clock ; their parents never went to bed at all. The Queen had written to her mother and her sister Elisabeth (the Empress

of Russia) to inform them of the happy turn of events, and the King had been far too restless to do aught but pursue his usual tramp.

Soon after 6 a.m. the Royal Family stood waiting, ready equipped for the journey, in the large hall, where two guards were also ; the suite were gathered in the room adjoining. It was a cruelly cold and bitter morning, and though the children were well wrapped up in cloaks and furs, they were shivering and shaking with the cold, only half-awake, and frightened at seeing their mother constantly watching the door with a scared look, as if she expected some dreadful apparition would enter. The King was calm and silent, but he changed colour every moment. Sometimes his face would turn a dark purple, as it generally did when he was annoyed or angry ; then, again, ghastly white, as if he were sick or sorry. And there they stood all in a row ; first the King, then the Queen, next Prince Gustaf, and the three little Princesses according to their age. Deep silence reigned in the room, save for the merry crackling of the wood in the huge fire-place, or the rattling of swords when the guards moved about. At last the door opened, and Count Posse was announced. The Queen trembled and turned quite faint when he entered accoutred for the journey, a pair of pistols stuck in his belt. He informed the King that he had been deputed to look after Prince Gustaf on the journey, and that he had received orders to start at once with the Prince by way of Jönköping, for Karlsrona.

The Queen uttered a cry of despair, and began to weep and sob. The King scrutinised the Colonel sharply, and asked : “ Have you any orders *in writing*, Colonel Posse ? ”

With a low bow the Count handed a paper to the King, which the latter read with knitted brows.

“ Yes, that is correct,” he said slowly. “ You are to go with the Colonel, my son,” he said, turning to the Crown-Prince, and pushing him almost roughly towards his escort.

But the Queen drew the boy towards her, and pressed him passionately to her bosom.

“ Oh, that can’t be right, surely not,” she cried. “ I will not be separated from him ; he must go with us.”

"It is quite correct," said the King gravely and constrainedly; "I have read the Colonel's orders." Turning to Posse, he added: "Be good enough to let the Queen see them also"; then he turned abruptly to the window.

"I have no wish to see those orders! No one can order a mother to give up her son. You have no intention of taking him to Karlsrona; you mean to imprison him afresh somewhere else, so that I shall never see him again; he shall not go with you," sobbed the Queen.

The young Princesses were so frightened at the Queen's ebullition of grief and anger that they, too, began to cry, but left off again immediately when the King turned round and looked at them sternly; the Queen also tried to restrain her feelings.

Her Consort had again turned his back to the room, but he heard how Colonel Posse assured the Queen, on his word of honour, that no harm should befall the Prince, who would most likely reach Karlsrona at the same time as his august parents, or immediately after.

"Let him come with me and the King," she said in persuasive tones.

"That may not be. Colonel Posse is bound to carry out his instructions, and I have read them," said the King hurriedly, but in such a voice that the Queen at once ceased her lamentations. She still kept the Prince pressed close to her, and lifted her tearful eyes to the King's face with an expression of mute entreaty that he would interfere; but he only shook his head and made a sign to her to let Prince Gustaf go. She kissed him again and again, and as she pressed her lips fondly on the fair little head, she whispered: "God bless and keep you! my own darling child, and restore you to me unharmed!"

Then she took him by the hand, and herself led him to his escort, saying: "Sir, I trust you with the life of my son; take care of him and protect him from all evil, and remember that some day his mother and God will hold you responsible for his life. Farewell . . . farewell!"

Prince Gustaf kissed his father's hand, and received a last

embrace from his mother, after which Colonel Posse hastily led him from the hall.

A few minutes' later the tramp of horses' feet and grinding of "sleepers" (on the sleighs) was heard, as the Prince's covered sleigh was driven rapidly across the inner courtyard. The Queen covered her face with both hands, and gave unrestrained vent to her grief.

The King remained at the window. "The sleigh is being driven by two of my adjutants, disguised as servants; by the light of the torches I recognised them," he said.

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Daylight was beginning slowly to creep up, and it was nearly eight o'clock when General Skjöldebrand was announced. The King, Queen, and small Princesses again stood in a row as he came in and walked straight up to the King. The General did not look half as awe-inspiring as Posse had done; his manner was deferential and courteous.

"Colonel Silversparre will have made Your Majesty acquainted with the arrangements for the impending journey, I think," he said.

The King drew himself up, and a glimmer of relief and satisfaction lighted up his eyes as he replied: "Yes, and I am ready; but have you no instructions in writing?"

General Skjöldebrand answered: "I have a letter for Your Majesty from the King, and one for Her Majesty from the Queen," and he handed the letters over.

They could not have seen to read them where they were standing in the middle of the hall, so they went to the window, perused the letters, compared them, and then put their heads together and considered.

"Let the Princesses take their seat in the closed carriages, and let them start before us," entreated the Queen, in a voice trembling with emotion. She was very white, and her eyes were sore with weeping.

"My instructions, Your Majesty, are that His Majesty shall leave with me alone at once, and that Your Majesty, with the Princesses, shall immediately follow us; you will travel in the

much greater ease and comfort, too. For this purpose forty horses have been ordered for the day after to-morrow for Your Majesty, the Princesses, and suite," replied Skjöldebrand decisively.

The Queen made several ineffectual attempts to speak; her voice had completely gone, but at last she managed to say in touching tones: "I cannot bear to see the King go and leave me behind; for God's sake let me come with him and you to-day!"

General Skjöldebrand hardened his heart, and retorted in a voice which he meant to be incontrovertibly stern, but which sounded rather hopeful to the Queen's ears: "His Majesty will be obliged to travel day and night in order to avoid any crowd and demonstrations."

The King bent his head in affirmation, which nearly drove the Queen to despair. In his mildest tones Skjöldebrand added:

"Your Majesty could not stand such hard travelling as we shall have to go through, without any rest, even at night."

"Oh yes; I can, I *can*," burst out the Queen, her beautiful eyes suffused with tears; "I can do anything but leave the King, that I *cannot*. Is there not *one* little corner in the sleigh into which I could creep? I will make myself ever so small, and take up no room; only say I may come!"

Gustaf Adolf would only too gladly have supported his wife's request, but his pride and dignity would not allow him to stoop to ask any favour of his custodian; he had a strong desire to let the Queen see that he was not vexed, but that he was genuinely gratified by her wish. . . . He was trying to find suitable words wherewith to express his feelings; but, alas! the only result was that, in the effort to conceal his nervousness, when at last he *did* speak, his voice sounded cold and hard in its solemnity.

"The Bible says that husband and wife are one; therefore I consider it right and fitting that the Queen should accompany me."

Her tearful, touching request had brought moisture to the eyes not only of General Skjöldebrand, but also of others who

were present. He strove to look stern and immovable, but when the Queen perceived that his eyes were wet, she repeated her prayer.

"If the King goes and I am left behind, it will be the death of me," she said, trembling with excitement.

Skjöldebrand could hold out no longer.

"If Your Majesty can do without much luggage, except what is strictly necessary, and could be content with one maid on the journey, it is just possible that room *might* be found for Your Majesty in Colonel Silversparre's covered sleigh," he said at last.

The Queen cast one beaming look of gratitude at him, and cried eagerly: "Not one moment shall you be kept waiting." Then she hurried into her room and reappeared, in an incredibly short time, dressed in a white coat bordered with sable and hood to match. Mistress Del Sasse, one of her women, followed, bearing a small bundle, which the Queen exhibited to Skjöldebrand exultingly, asking him whether it were too heavy or bulky to be taken, and when he replied in the negative, she embraced and kissed her little daughters; then, throwing them a final kiss from the tips of her fingers and a "We shall soon meet again, my darlings," she pushed past the King, the officers, and guard, and tripped down the great staircase out into the quadrangle. When the King mounted the sleigh with Skjöldebrand, and they drove across the square thickly covered with snow, the Queen and her attendant had taken their places in Colonel Silversparre's sleigh. Only one lackey, the King's own valet, was allowed to accompany them; he closed the door of the sleigh, and then jumped up on to the dickey behind, having first, at the request of the Queen, begged the officer on the box to let her sleigh follow that containing the King as closely as possible. As, however, Skjöldebrand had, on second thoughts, not deemed it advisable that the Royal couple should travel in the same conveyance, and with a lurking desire to secure more comfort for the Queen, he had ordered a second sleigh of the Governor's for her use to follow close upon that of the King and himself.

The latter was driven by an officer in mufti, with two or

three others in like attire, having swords and fire-arms concealed under their great-coats.

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The King was seated on the right of General Skjöldebrand, and when the horses had at last dragged the heavy, cumbersome vehicle through the deep snow in the yard and were able to go at a pretty good pace along the level road, his heart began to beat with the usual pleasant excitement of the movement and travel he loved. The roads were good and the air was frosty and invigorating, with no suspicion of a thaw. The King took out his watch ; it was just upon nine o'clock, and the daylight increased with every minute, whilst a faint gleam of the rising sun began to light up the snowy landscape ahead. The horses galloped *up* the hills, and seemed to fly *down* them, and the melodious sound of the carefully attuned sleigh-bells came like sweetest music to the King's ears ; it almost made him forget that this was his last drive in the land over which he had ruled as Sovereign for seventeen years. The feeling uppermost in his mind was one of intense thankfulness at the thought that now, at last, he would be free, and far away from that weird and gloomy Gripsholm and the pain and anxiety he had undergone there during his imprisonment those eight weary months. Only he and his Maker knew what he had suffered, and how earnestly he had striven, daily and hourly, to be calm and submissive to the fiat of the Almighty, to whose councils alone it was known whether the King were destined to be the wearer of an earthly, corruptible crown, or a heavenly, incorruptible one, awarded to the pious and pure in heart and righteous in judgment. He felt more and more that the latter was decreed by God's grace and favour to be *his* portion.

With every mile that took him farther from Gripsholm he called to mind how, contrary to all expectation, the Almighty had not only preserved him alive, but also delivered him from captivity at a time and under circumstances when the fate of Louis XVI and other Royal martyrs seemed plainly destined to be his own ; his face glowed with happiness and satisfaction

when the first milestone had been passed. Once more the blessed consciousness that he was under the special protection of God took possession of him, and the comforting feeling that he should be free to go where it would please God to send him when these last few miserable days should be over. He would have felt quite happy, and would have enjoyed the unaccustomed drive, and grand, invigorating air, if his pride had not been chafed by the uncomfortable fact that the man sitting by his side, the Commander on duty, had in reality no business there. During the eight months of his captivity he had grown accustomed to have all his movements and actions watched indoors, but he could not reconcile himself to having a "keeper" forced upon him to watch him in his carriage. It was not that he harboured any personal ill-feeling towards Skjöldebrand; it was that gentleman's present *office* which irritated and galled the King. Just now he only wanted to think of the blessed fact that he would soon be free, but instead of being able to indulge in such pleasing reflections he felt it incumbent upon him to keep a strict eye upon Skjöldebrand, and to administer to him a wholesome snub should he in any way forget the deference and respect due to the King. This *gêne* so worried him that, ere long, his former weariness and apathy returned, for not only did he feel obliged to keep watch over Skjöldebrand, but over himself as well, so that he might not be led to betray what he felt during the long journey. Skjöldebrand should only see a calm, stoical countenance, and the kingly reserve and haughtiness which a monarch was bound to maintain under all conditions. On no account must the smallest occasion be afforded to the General to be able to report to his benefactor (the new King) that the deposed Sovereign had shown any sign of mortification or regret; he wished him to be able to tell his master that Gustaf Adolf had bidden farewell to Sweden with haughty indifference. But all of a sudden the King's lip began to twitch painfully, and sad and angry tears rose unbidden to his eyes, so that he abruptly turned his face away.

The sleigh was just passing the gilt and iron gates to a long avenue of old trees, revealing a huge, palatial building at the end; the King knew it well, for he and the Queen had often

spent a night within its hospitable walls on their way from the south to Stockholm. Now another King and another Queen had arisen in the land, and the noble lord who owned and resided in that magnificent mansion would have to thank the new King on his bended knees if ever *he* honoured that splendid abode with his gracious presence. The King and Queen, whom the host and hostess had been wont to receive with so much courtly grace and respect on the lowest steps of the terrace, were even now being driven, luckless exiles, past those closed gates with double haste, the driver having whipped up the horses into a gallop when nearing the place.

The King entered into conversation with Skjöldebrand in order to divert his thoughts, which grew more oppressive as they passed through more populous places and met more people. His remarks were only commonplace, and the General was not supposed to notice how distraught and absent-minded the King was.

On starting Skjöldebrand had peremptorily but respectfully requested him not to show his face at the carriage window, and it seemed odd to him to be obliged to lean *back* in his corner, so that he might not be seen, every time anyone passed, either driving or on foot, instead of leaning *forward*, as had been his custom when travelling in the provinces, so that the people might get a good view of their King, and show their loyalty by humble but hearty cheers and greetings, which he was always punctilious in graciously acknowledging. It was most humiliating and irksome to him now to have to withdraw and hide himself from the public gaze, as if he had committed some crime to be ashamed of.

The travellers had now come to the second halting-place, where a relay of horses was to be got. A large crowd had gathered in front of the inn, and the King interrogated Skjöldebrand as to the cause. The latter gave a hasty glance through the window, and exchanged a few words in a low voice with the officers on the box.

"There seems to be a sale on," he answered as the Royal equipage drove into the yard, which was encumbered with all sorts of furniture and agricultural utensils and crowded with

conveyances and people. Men came out of the inn dragging great four-posters into the yard, others brought chests and chairs and tables to be packed on the purchasers' vehicles ; the women carried spinning-wheels, winding-spools, kettles, pans, and saucepans lovingly in their arms, and endeavoured to find room for them among the larger articles on the carts. The King felt curiously uncomfortable at not being able to greet these good folk. Skjöldebrand had requested him to remain seated in the carriage while the horses were being changed ; he did so, looking very grave and listlessly watching the busy throng. The General himself had got out and stood by the door of the carriage talking to His Majesty, who very well saw through his efforts to hide him from the crowd. Skjöldebrand had suddenly become very cheerful and loquacious, and tried his best to divert the King's thoughts. Gustaf Adolf had grown more than usually depressed during the last few hours.

The people were no longer so busy now ; the men had gathered in small knots, and were curiously watching this hurried putting-to of horses, and talked in low tones. For a moment the General left the King, but only to tell the men to make more haste ; and the latter never moved, but leant back in his corner with the same strained look in his eyes. He had never before felt the least awkward and nervous, no matter how great the crowd, but now he felt both since he could not let himself be seen, and it fretted and worried him. He heard the men's whispers, and noted that several of the women wept, drying their eyes with a corner of their aprons. He himself was more than half inclined to tears, but at that instant Skjöldebrand returned and called the King's attention to a man who was just passing and looked in. The King had never seen such an extraordinary nose . . . it was coppery-red and swollen, and had a dreadful excrescence on either side, which gave the man's face a most grotesque appearance, and so fascinated the King that he could not take his eyes off him. Skjöldebrand laughed, and told him some joke about that curious nose, which the King failed to take in, though the General thought he did ; but all at once Gustaf Adolf burst

into a loud laugh that brought the tears into his eyes. He had no idea what made him laugh, but he seemed unable to stop, and his laugh grew more shrill and loud. The horses were ready now, and the two officers had mounted the box again. When the carriage moved on the King was still laughing hysterically. A remark he heard, made by a man quite close to him, suddenly stopped his laughter. The man said : " I suppose he likes the journey as he is so merry about it ! "

He looked round like one suddenly waking from a dream ; it dawned upon him that he had been recognised, that the women's tears had been tears of sympathy and pity, and that the men's subdued whispers had probably been threats and imprecations against Skjöldebrand and his myrmidons, and that it had been policy on the General's part to make him appear as cheerful and indifferent as possible, and the King had . . . *laughed !* *He*, who so seldom had been seen even to . . . *smile !*

And just at this juncture, too ! Supposing he had *not* laughed, and the people had *not* been led to think he liked the journey . . . what might have been the result . . . ?

And as the sleigh, with fresh horses, sped along the road, the King sat and meditated on these things.

After all, he thought, perhaps it was no matter for regret ; even should the heavy responsibilities and burdens of kingship be once more laid at his feet, he would be too weary to take them up ; so he considered that his having laughed, in reality, made no difference at all ! . . .

The journey was continued southward to the Province of Småland, through Norrköping and Linköping. General Skjöldebrand was as entertaining and agreeable an escort as the King could possibly have desired under the circumstances ; and not only that, he possessed infinite tact, and showed such considerateness as the King had never experienced during his hateful confinement at Gripsholm. Gustaf Adolf, a keen observer of trifles, also felt very grateful to Skjöldebrand for having forbidden the lackey to come into the waiting-room at the different inns and shout " Dinner is served," as he had done at the first halt. Now the General had given orders

to his own man to inform him quietly when the meals were ready, and had then himself gone to their Majesties and said softly, and with a low bow, "Dinner is served, Your Majesty."

Improvements were to be noticed in other directions also since they had started. From his carriage the King had observed, with much annoyance, that at every place where a halt had to be made for the purpose of obtaining fresh horses, the younger officers of the escort had posted themselves in close proximity to the Queen's sleigh, and cast somewhat bold looks at her. It was true that they stood in respectful attitude with bared heads, still the King considered it an impertinence. No gentleman would have dared attempt it had he still been in power, and this feeling irritated him greatly. Sometimes when the Queen, in an ill-advised moment of kindness, entered into conversation with one or another of these young bloods, whose faces beamed with delight at the unwonted condescension, the King was very near bursting into a storm of indignant fury, especially during the first days, when he could do nothing, as he was forced to remain in his carriage. Not for worlds would he have uttered a complaint to Skjöldebrand, nor proffered a request that *he* would beg the young men to desist from annoying the Queen in that objectionable manner. . . . Yet how were his wishes to be made known without anything being said ?

At length the journey lay through a part of the country where the King was less likely to be known, therefore there was no need to watch him so closely ; he was allowed to leave the carriage when a halt was made, and thus he could protect the Queen from too close attentions on the part of his former subjects. She had no one else to protect her ! No more sentinels . . . no more Gentlemen-in-Waiting ! When, as usual, the officers, bareheaded, approached the Queen's sleigh to feast their eyes on her charms, the King, proud and cold, would take up a position between them and his Consort, and shelter her from their admiring gaze with his person ; so he would stand until all was ready for resuming the journey, never addressing a word to the Queen or anyone else, and taking no heed of the wind or snow.

Skjöldebrand was not slow in grasping the situation, and impressed upon the young men their want of chivalry and good breeding in thus staring at the Queen, with good effect. Still, whenever opportunity offered, the King left his carriage and went to the side of the Queen's, inquiring after her health, and seeking to know how she was bearing the fatigue and discomforts of the journey. Her reply always was that she was well enough, but that her thoughts were constantly with her little son, wondering how he was faring, and whether they would have long to wait after their arrival at Karlserona before he joined them. The King's face always grew sad and serious when the conversation turned upon Prince Gustaf.

"I think a great deal about him, too," he said. "The Swedish nation has done him a great wrong in excluding him from the succession; no doubt God will punish them for it. As far as he, personally, is concerned, I do not by any means look upon the forfeiture of the Crown as a misfortune; he will be a vast deal happier without it. It is a hard task to rule a country, and there are always people who are discontented with whatever is done. I know I found it so, but then I had many disadvantages to contend with which Gustaf would not have had."

The Queen tried to woo the King from his melancholy reflections. Instead of making any reply to them, she observed: "There is plenty of time on a journey like this to think of all sorts of things; I often think what a curious world it is. When I came over I first set foot on Swedish soil at Karlserona; then I went to Gripsholm, and from there to Drottningholm. Now that I am leaving Sweden the route is precisely the same, only the other way on, from Drottningholm to Gripsholm, and from Gripsholm to Karlserona, and then . . . goodbye to Sweden for ever!"

"And I," said the King, "whilst I pretend to listen to Skjöldebrand, sit and think what a curious influence the number thirteen has had on my life. Even the name, G-u-s-t-a-f A-d-o-l-f IV is composed of thirteen letters."

The Queen counted them up: "Yes, that is quite true, if

you reckon the number four as two letters," she said, slightly hesitating.

"Yes, I do," said the King; "I am the thirteenth in succession to Gustavus Wasa."

"Are you really?" said the Queen, as though rather doubting this assertion.

"Yes, I am; I mean the *thirteenth* King of Sweden from the time of Gustavus Wasa—I am not counting the *Queens*. At the age of *thirteen* I became King, and I reigned *thirteen* years after attaining my majority. I was made a prisoner on the *thirteenth* of March. It is now twenty-two times *thirteen* years since Gustavus Wasa was elected King of Sweden in 1523, and seven times *thirteen* years since the death of Charles XII in 1718; these dates added together produce the number 1809 the current year." (? ?)

"And you have been reckoning up all this on the journey?" cried the Queen with surprise and admiration.

"It has been a long and tedious one, though we have travelled with all speed," answered the King; "but I began my reckoning before we left Gripsholm. If you transpose the numbers one and three, which stand for thirteen, they make thirty-one, which is precisely my age now."

"That is true, too," said the Queen; "you are just thirty-one." Then she added quickly, and with deep feeling in her voice: "Believe me, dear, I am glad to leave this land, and have not the slightest regret for the loss of the throne. If I could only see you as happy as you deserve to be, and my children strong and merry . . ."

"I was not born to be ever what you call 'happy,'" replied the King with a shake of the head. "Rosenstein, my old tutor, used frequently to tell me, when I was a boy, that I expected too much from people and things, and that I should be grievously disappointed in both, and he has proved right. What I believed and expected always turned out otherwise than I thought God meant it to."

Here he stopped for a while, but presently continued, with quivering voice: "And I believe it always will be so, even though it is not given me to see it as King. It takes time

to become accustomed to the idea that from the beginning one has not been destined to enjoy earthly happiness and prosperity ; but I shall acquire that knowledge when I shall so soon be free from my chains and burdens. It has been a terribly long, weary journey."

"Is Your Majesty so done up with it?" asked the Queen, alarmed at the sorrowful and tired look in her husband's eyes.

He only shook his head and said: "No, it is not that. Småland is an extensive province, but it must come to an end at last. It cannot be many more miles to the border; one more day's journey, and we shall be at Karlserona and leave all this behind for ever."

The Queen cast an anxious glance after him as he left her carriage and went back to his own.

The way now led through an unpleasing, desolate region, with long tracks of marshland on either side . . . the shallow pools were thinly covered with ice, and the soft, thick snow had changed into dirty slush, so that the progress of the sleighs was rendered more and more difficult with every stage. The sleighing had suddenly to be abandoned, and a conveyance on wheels had to be procured for the King. However, Karlserona was reached at length, and the Royal Family were lodged in the so-called "King's House," the first in which Queen Frederica had rested on her arrival in Sweden. It was also destined to be the last; but all her thoughts now centred on Prince Gustaf, and who shall describe her joy when, only an hour later, he and Colonel Posse arrived safely! She could not bear him out of her sight for an instant; she asked him about his journey, whether he had felt the cold much, whether he was very tired, etc. etc., and thanked Colonel Posse over and over again for his kind care of the Prince, and for having so well executed his trust. The King embraced the boy tenderly and patted him on the head before sending him off to bed, and then withdrew to his own room.

It struck the officials, who had been charged to receive the late Royal Family at Karlserona, as rather curious that Prince Gustaf should be wearing all his decorations, whilst

the King was in plain clothes, without any, save the Cross of the Knights of Saint John of Malta.

The young Princesses did not reach Karlscrona until five days after their Majesties, when the suite and baggage also arrived. The journey from Sweden might have been undertaken at once, but, unfortunately, the frigate *Camilla* which was to convey the Royal Family to Germany was not ready, so they had to remain at Karlscrona for a few days, and might have had to wait even longer if General Skjöldebrand had not been alarmed by news which reached him from Stockholm that King Charles had been taken seriously ill.

He was most anxious that no suspicion of the new King's illness should come to the knowledge of Gustaf Adolf, as, under the circumstances, his presence in the country might give rise to demonstrations, and, possibly, a counter-revolution; therefore preparations for departure were hurried on apace. Even should adverse winds continue and delay the journey, and should the *Camilla* not be quite ready to start, it would be advisable to have the Royal Family on board, where no one would be allowed to approach or communicate with them without a written order from the Admiral-in-Chief, Puke, to the Commander of the frigate, Count Trolle.

So a few days only before Christmas the Royal Family embarked. Gustaf Adolf had spent the last day in writing various letters, and long past the hour fixed for going on board he was still busy at his writing-table. When it began to grow dark he at last pulled himself together and went into the room adjoining, where his family and attendants were waiting. As he entered he heard Prince Gustaf sobbing loudly. The King, very pale, bit his lip and turned away; then he took up his three-cornered hat, planted it firmly on his head, and advanced towards the door; the Queen and the two eldest Princesses followed him, the two youngest were in their nurses' arms. The travellers were driven down to the quay in carriages lent by Admiral Puke and the Sheriff Håkansson, and had a short distance to walk. The King, with General Skjöldebrand, was silent as usual, and the Queen talked excitedly to her children. The King's white face had grown even whiter when he had to

pass the sentries on getting out of the carriage. He breathed a fervent prayer that they might present arms to him once more : " Oh, God, spare me the humiliation of having to pass them unnoticed ! " much as a child might pray for the remission of some undeserved punishment. Outwardly he maintained an appearance of indifference and hauteur as he walked down at the General's side ; only when the sentry made no movement his pale face turned purple, and betrayed to the attentive Skjöldebrand the mental agony the King was enduring. Having passed the archway leading to the wharf, the King stood still and looked round. The place where he now was had always been dear to his heart. As King he had never felt happier than when coming down to Karlserona from Stockholm to witness the launching of some warship, to be present at some naval manœuvre, or watch the graceful evolutions of some new ship of the line. The difficulties and fatigues of the journey had never been an obstacle, even if his stay there were but limited ; he had delighted in the busy life at the docks, where it seemed to him that the greatness and power of Sweden were being fortified by wooden walls of the best Swedish timber, welded together with the hardest iron found in Swedish mines. Here, too, lay the huge storehouses and the summer workshops ; here was the place where the anchors were forged and the ropes twisted ; there stood the tremendous crane, and high above these rose the hull of the big new battleship in process of building, the launching of which he was never destined to see ! When it should be ready to leave the stocks, his lines would be cast far from the land which had given him birth, and on the soil of which his feet were never more to tread when once he had stepped off the narrow landing-bridge, on either side of which great ships lay moored, whilst at the end thereof he could perceive the small Crown pinnacle which was to convey himself and his family to the frigate.

The King stood calm, erect, and very white, but his eyes were dry. He appeared to be measuring the distances between the different boats and the shore, and to be scanning the buildings dotting the countryside, and the small craft bobbing

up and down on the turbid water. He had not expected to find these last moments so trying. The twilight was fading fast, and it was misty and drizzling.

General Skjöldebrand had patiently waited for the King to go on. He could guess pretty well what was in his mind, and now roused him from his bitter reflections by saying :

“ Your Majesty will understand that, travelling incognito, the sentry could not present arms to Your Majesty, nor could they have paid due respect to Your Majesty without the accompaniment of their band, and that would have been tantamount to announcing Your Majesty’s presence.”

The King vouchsafed no reply, but in his own mind, as he walked down the narrow stage, he thought : “ Of course, I understand but too well, yet even so it is hard ; they need not have grudged me that last little sign of respect in Sweden . . . if only as an acknowledgment that they knew that I *meant* to do well. But ah me ! the ways of God are past finding out ! ”

With slow and lingering steps he approached the place where the pinnacle was moored ; he turned and saw the pretty little city, its bays and islets and the lights just being lighted in the comfortable red houses ; he thought of the announcement the people would read in the next morning’s paper : “ An exalted personage, whose name is not to be mentioned, has forwarded to the Governor, Count Håkansson, by the hand of Colonel Silversparre, the sum of two hundred and sixty-seven riksdaler, to be distributed amongst the most necessitous inhabitants of Karlserona.” Maybe that this last gift of “ an exalted personage ” may help to bring a little additional light and warmth into some of those little red houses. Maybe that . . .

All around was quiet and silent. No work was being done that afternoon, and the usual busy yards and workshops lay deserted. The King could not imagine that the sound of hammer and axe would be heard on the morrow as usual, that ships would proudly sail and men climb the riggings and sing as usual, when hauling the ropes, and that the blue and yellow flag would flutter gaily in the breeze when Sweden had sent away her King into . . . lifelong exile !

pass the sentries on getting out of the carriage. He breathed a fervent prayer that they might present arms to him once more : " Oh, God, spare me the humiliation of having to pass them unnoticed ! " much as a child might pray for the remission of some undeserved punishment. Outwardly he maintained an appearance of indifference and hauteur as he walked down at the General's side ; only when the sentry made no movement his pale face turned purple, and betrayed to the attentive Skjöldebrand the mental agony the King was enduring. Having passed the archway leading to the wharf, the King stood still and looked round. The place where he now was had always been dear to his heart. As King he had never felt happier than when coming down to Karlscrona from Stockholm to witness the launching of some warship, to be present at some naval manœuvre, or watch the graceful evolutions of some new ship of the line. The difficulties and fatigues of the journey had never been an obstacle, even if his stay there were but limited ; he had delighted in the busy life at the docks, where it seemed to him that the greatness and power of Sweden were being fortified by wooden walls of the best Swedish timber, welded together with the hardest iron found in Swedish mines. Here, too, lay the huge storehouses and the summer workshops ; here was the place where the anchors were forged and the ropes twisted ; there stood the tremendous crane, and high above these rose the hull of the big new battleship in process of building, the launching of which he was never destined to see ! When it should be ready to leave the stocks, his lines would be cast far from the land which had given him birth, and on the soil of which his feet were never more to tread when once he had stepped off the narrow landing-bridge, on either side of which great ships lay moored, whilst at the end thereof he could perceive the small Crown pinnacle which was to convey himself and his family to the frigate.

The King stood calm, erect, and very white, but his eyes were dry. He appeared to be measuring the distances between the different boats and the shore, and to be scanning the buildings dotting the countryside, and the small craft bobbing

up and down on the turbid water. He had not expected to find these last moments so trying. The twilight was fading fast, and it was misty and drizzling.

General Skjöldebrand had patiently waited for the King to go on. He could guess pretty well what was in his mind, and now roused him from his bitter reflections by saying :

“Your Majesty will understand that, travelling incognito, the sentry could not present arms to Your Majesty, nor could they have paid due respect to Your Majesty without the accompaniment of their band, and that would have been tantamount to announcing Your Majesty’s presence.”

The King vouchsafed no reply, but in his own mind, as he walked down the narrow stage, he thought : “Of course, I understand but too well, yet even so it is hard ; they need not have grudged me that last little sign of respect in Sweden . . . if only as an acknowledgment that they knew that I *meant* to do well. But ah me ! the ways of God are past finding out !”

With slow and lingering steps he approached the place where the pinnacle was moored ; he turned and saw the pretty little city, its bays and islets and the lights just being lighted in the comfortable red houses ; he thought of the announcement the people would read in the next morning’s paper : “An exalted personage, whose name is not to be mentioned, has forwarded to the Governor, Count Håkansson, by the hand of Colonel Silversparre, the sum of two hundred and sixty-seven riksdaler, to be distributed amongst the most necessitous inhabitants of Karlscrona.” Maybe that this last gift of “an exalted personage” may help to bring a little additional light and warmth into some of those little red houses. Maybe that . . .

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Would it not be more fitting that everything *should* stand still when her King was saying "Adieu!" never to return?

The slender figure in the tightly-buttoned black coat took one more look round; but the increasing darkness blurred the landscape to his view; the black waters were surging round him on either side, and beyond the Fort of Kungsholm, in the open sea, he could discern angry waves rising mountain high, flinging their snowy froth up into the air.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

A VIOLENT gale was raging at Bruchsal; so fierce were the gusts that the waters of the exquisite fountain in front of the Palace were blown about in all directions. It seemed a sad pity that such a mercilessly blustering day should occur in this month of March, when spring had already begun in Baden, and the trees were putting forth their first tender green.

The storm was bad enough without the Palace, yet a fiercer storm and no less disastrous appeared to be raging within.

Since the first day of February the Margravine of Baden had had her daughter, her son-in-law (the dethroned King of Sweden), their children and suite under her hospitable roof at Bruchsal, and she began to long for the day when they should move to the castle of Meersburg, which the aged Grand Duke had generously placed at the disposal of the Royal exiles for life. Delighted as the Margravine had at first been to have her children and grandchildren round her, their continual presence had not proved an unmixed pleasure, since her beloved son-in-law, as usual, had acted in his headstrong manner and would not brook the slightest or most delicate interference in his affairs. At the present time, however, everything seemed to have been arranged satisfactorily for all concerned, and the Grand Duke had commissioned his Chamberlain, Baron von Stetten, to have the castle of Meersburg thoroughly overhauled, and to see that furniture, plate, linen, and bedding were of such quality and in such condition as befitted the status of the Royal personages about to take

possession. Now all was in readiness, and it only rested with their Majesties to fix the day for their "fitting."

To the utter dismay and astonishment of the Margravine, Gustaf Adolf, that selfsame morning, announced to her his firm determination *not* to go to Meersburg, either within the next few days or, indeed, at any other time. So greatly taken aback had she been at this announcement that she had been unable to say a word in reply before he left the apartment. Now she awaited in trembling apprehension the result of the conversation which Queen Frederica was probably at this moment having with her unamenable spouse.

The Queen had obeyed the summons to his presence with anything but a light heart. She knew his character, naturally, far better than did the Margravine. During the humiliating journey to Germany, *en route* for Baden, he had already terrified her by declaring before the Swedish nobles who accompanied him, that he would not go beyond Hamburg, and that he meant to travel as far as the Moravian Colony at Christiansfeld and settle among them for good and all. She and her children were at liberty to continue their journey to Baden if she wished ! What awful days and nights had passed before the Swedes had succeeded in talking the King over, and before the whole party had been once more packed safely into their coaches and the road to Bruchsal resumed !

Good heavens ! Once arrived at Baden, Queen Frederica had expected and believed that all would go well, and had been pleased and grateful to see that not only her venerable grandfather and her adored mother, but her relatives, without exception, showed the greatest consideration, courtesy, and attention to the deposed monarch. The Queen's brother-in-law, the Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, and his wife, who came to see their Majesties, behaved with the same deference and respect, almost amounting to awe, as they had done when they had met Gustaf Adolf at Baden on a very different occasion. With much inward satisfaction the Queen observed that this seemed to please her husband, and that, upon the whole, his temper seemed no more irritable and capricious at Baden than it had frequently been in Sweden.

But who *could* possibly reckon with his incomprehensible moods and fancies? On this day there were unmistakable signs of thunder in the air, and the Queen's heart beat fast and loud as she softly knocked at the door of the King's room and patiently waited for permission to enter. She was well aware that, for some reason best known to himself, he had not been pleased with her of late. As she opened the door a sudden gust of wind tore it from her hand, and it shut with a fearful bang, which caused her Consort, who was standing by the open window, to turn round sharply and exclaim in a tone of annoyance: "Could you not manage to come in quietly, gently, without making such an unseemly noise?"

"It was the wind," she meekly replied, as she took a seat in an arm-chair near a large oval table of superb malachite, which the Empress Elisabeth and the Emperor Alexander of Russia had sent as a present to the Margravine some little time before.

For a time Gustaf Adolf remained at the window in studied silence. Suddenly he turned, and walked up the long "Yellow Damask" drawing-room until he came in front of the Queen. Looking her hard in the face, he said: "What is it you want with me?"

"I want to know whether it is really a fact that you told my mother you would not go to Meersburg?" She spoke quickly, lest her courage should fail her before she had finished.

"You have been rightly informed; I *did* tell the Margravine so."

His tone was hard and chilling. Nevertheless, though deeply agitated, the Queen resumed:

"And yet, methinks, you could not possibly refuse such a generous offer. What would my grandfather think or say?"

"I am in the habit of deciding for myself, and do not care a rap for what mightier princes than *even* the Grand Duke of Baden may say or think."

Again the Queen said something which she had better not have said if she meant to attain her end.

"My grandfather had, I am sure, only the very kindest intention in making this offer, and we all thought you were accepting it with pleasure."

"If your grandfather really *had* such kind intentions, why did he not propose my settling at Karlsruhe?" asked the King sharply.

"Out of regard for France, he *could* not; but at Meersburg *all* the advantage is on *our* side."

"What do you mean by 'our' side?"

"On yours and mine and that of our children. If we accept my grandfather's offer our establishment would practically cost us nothing, and we could have the whole of our apanage from Sweden for our personal use. It would have taken a considerable sum if *we* had had to get all the necessities provided for our comfort there. You cannot give one single good reason for refusing . . . you have no reason."

Gustaf Adolf cast a wrathful look at his wife, and was very nearly answering her: "I do not wish to be beholden to anybody's generosity, and were I fortunate enough to have no one but myself to think of, I should at once refuse all financial help from Sweden"; but he did not say this aloud, not from any desire to spare the Queen's feelings . . . simply in order not to lay bare his *own*.

Why *was* she not wary? Why *had* she not been sharp enough to divine his motives now . . . and *why* had she not been wise enough to refrain from any allusion to her grandfather's generosity or the subsidies from Sweden, knowing both to be a sore subject with the King? He had often felt more than half inclined to tell her that he would infinitely prefer to live the simple life of a private individual with slender means, yea, in poverty, if need be, so long as he was free and no one interfered with him; but he knew she would not understand him. A deep flush overspread his countenance as he thought of this, and the hundred and one trifles which so irritated him. In bitterness of spirit he reflected that neither his Queen nor any one else *ever* had understood his ways.

The Queen, whom his prolonged silence rendered increasingly nervous, and who was seriously alarmed when she saw the blood mounting to her husband's temples, once more essayed to speak. With a most fascinating smile and in her sweetest tone she said: "Meersburg is such a lovely spot; you remember

that I was there one spring for the air and to drink goats' milk for an affection of the chest ? ”

“ There is no earthly reason *you* should not go and settle at Meersburg, since you seem so fond of the place,” he snapped savagely in reply.

“ You would be fond of it too, if you knew it better. I beg of you . . . give me, at least, *one* plausible reason for your decision.”

Gustaf Adolf, who had been impatiently pacing up and down the room while she was speaking, suddenly stopped, and eyeing her sharply, said with an ugly sneer : “ Can't you, by any manner of means, comprehend *why* I will not accept the Grand Duke's offer ? ”

“ No, I really cannot. The situation of Meersburg is beautiful, and there is the most exquisite view from all the windows.”

“ Everybody is always telling me that,” he burst out fiercely. “ The truth is that I am sick to death of ‘ exquisite views ’ ; I had enough of them from my prison window at Gripsholm last year. The view from Meersburg is precisely the same as that from Gripsholm, both over a large lake ; and as the rooms at Meersburg are hung with old Gobelin tapestries, as were the rooms at Gripsholm, it would be a double reminder of my days of durance vile. But even at Gripsholm there was a small garden with trees, where I could occasionally take the air with my family. All that I lacked was LIBERTY ; that liberty I am now resolved to enjoy to the full, and the first use I shall make of it will be to choose a convenient spot where I can live unmolested. There is someone knocking at the door . . . who is it ? ”

“ It is I,” replied the Margravine from without, and Queen Frederica hurriedly rose to open the door to her mother. But before she had time to enter, the Queen, with a significative shrug of her shoulders and a covert grimace, gave her to understand that she, Frederica, had been quite powerless against her husband's obstinacy, and that the Margravine's tact and diplomacy would have to be taxed to the uttermost if matters were to culminate as they both so ardently desired.

With the pleasantest of smiles the stately Margravine took the chair her son-in-law offered her, and at her earnest request he took a seat between her and the Queen. His face had regained its usual pallor, and bore an expression of intense weariness and suffering.

"And now, my dear son, be good enough to give me your final decision. When I write to Baron von Stetten this evening, what am I to say to him?" said the Margravine nonchalantly, as if the subject were being discussed for the first time. She had learnt that it was often more politic with Gustaf Adolf to come straight to the point; she had never accomplished much by beating about the bush.

"I would request my gracious mother-in-law to be kind enough to inform Baron von Stetten of what I have already told you, namely, that I am unable to accept the Grand Duke's offer or to settle at Meersburg. I promised the present King of Sweden, my uncle, that I would live in Switzerland, and that promise I intend to keep until he himself releases me from it and allows me to live wherever I like."

The Margravine screwed up her eyes and gave an odd little laugh.

"Surely, my dear boy, you need not be so over-scrupulous with your uncle. Meersburg is only a very short distance from the frontiers of Switzerland, a trifling matter of four or six miles, perhaps. I think you need have no qualms of conscience on that score."

"All the same, Meersburg is not *in* Switzerland," replied Gustaf Adolf in his most studied manner. "Moreover, it seems hardly worth while to waste more time in discussing this subject; suffice it to say that I do *not* intend to go to Meersburg."

The Margravine, however, had not yet done . . . she laid her hand gently on his arm, and in the half-persuasive, half-commanding tones she so well knew how to use when she meant to attain an object, she said: "Now do let *me* settle and arrange matters for you, my son; I know you will approve in the end."

His looks certainly did not warrant that assumption. If possible, he was even paler than before, and his lower lip

twitched angrily ; but he restrained himself and said : “ There is a good deal of wind to-day, mother ; do you not feel it ? ”

“ Of course I feel it,” answered the Margravine, drawing her rich Indian shawl more closely round her. “ There is a perfect hurricane blowing in.”

“ Allow me to shut the window, then,” replied Gustaf Adolf meekly.

Saying which he went to the window and closed it . . . but did not resume his seat.

In answer to a pleading look and sign from the Queen, the Margravine rose and approached the King. Giving him her hand, she said : “ Thank you, my son ; now let us all three sit down again and consider . . . ”

“ That is totally unnecessary,” he answered, rudely shaking off her hand from his arm. Still the Margravine was not going to be silenced like that. As *his* obstinacy and determination increased, *hers* did likewise. She meant to arrange as would be best for her children and herself, and so she continued :

“ I suppose I may at least inform Baron von Stetten that you will be going to Meersburg when the sweet springtime is a little more advanced, and that you will see how you get on there ? If you should really not like it, you will always be at liberty to look out for some other desirable spot in Switzerland, though you will probably never find one with all the comforts and amenities of Meersburg. Moreover, you must know how distasteful a residence in Switzerland would be to your wife, and you ought certainly not to refuse the offer of an affectionate and well-intentioned relative ; it is both thoughtless and foolish. Going to Meersburg, you . . . ”

Queen Frederica hastily laid a hand on her mother's to prevent her saying anything further, for her quick eye had noted that Gustaf Adolf was boiling over with rage which he could no longer control. Nor did he attempt it. He cried : “ No, no ! ” in such a passion that the spacious room quite seemed to shake. He violently stamped his foot on the floor and beat the air with his clenched fists, till he suddenly seemed on the

verge of fainting from exhaustion, uttering plaintive groans as his hands dropped listlessly to his side.

"Be so good as to leave me to myself," he said, as he sank wearily down on a couch which stood against the wall; there he sat shading his eyes with his hands. "I can bear no more," he said; "I am very ill."

"I am sorry to hear it," observed the Margravine, with an incredulous, malignant smile. "Anyhow, you need not have worked yourself up to such a pitch with a *lady*, and a near relation who always has your welfare at heart."

"For heaven's sake go, and leave me," groaned Gustaf Adolf. Seeing that Queen Frederica was more than half inclined to remain, he turned upon her and said crossly: "Go away, go away! both of you."

The tempest was not allayed, but gathered strength with every hour. That afternoon the Margravine's son-in-law and guest was struck down with a severe attack of jaundice!

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Several weeks had passed, and it was April once more and Easter Eve. The King had completely recovered from the illness following upon the excitement of his altercation with his mother-in-law, who herself experienced a feeling of satisfaction just now, not only at the recovery of the august patient, but mainly because she had got her way with regard to the settling of the Royal Family of Sweden at Meersburg. She had had a brilliant inspiration! She had persuaded General Skjöldebrand when he was spending a few days at Bruchsal, *en route* from Paris to Stockholm, to have a serious talk with his former Sovereign. So well had this ruse succeeded, that immediate orders were sent to Baron von Stetten to lay in stores and have everything in readiness for the first days of the approaching Easter week. *How* the General had managed to bring his whimsical and pig-headed master to another way of thinking the Margravine was at a loss to guess, although she knew that he had given Gustaf Adolf a written message from his uncle to the effect that he should not consider it a breach of promise on the part of his nephew if, during the summer months,

he did *not* go to Switzerland and preferred to remain within the boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Baden. What she did *not* know was the fact that General Skjöldebrand had strongly represented to the King that he, his family and suite had already too long accepted and lived upon the hospitality of the Margravine, especially as that great lady's own finances were probably not in a very flourishing condition, seeing that the imposts Napoleon had laid upon the German Princes were very heavy. *This* it was which had worked upon Gustaf Adolf, so that in the end he had said to Baron von Skjöldebrand, albeit very unwillingly and apathetically : " Very well, then—I will try . . . "

In the fullness of their joy at this happy consummation, the Margravine and Queen Frederica had indulged in a good hug, but had wisely agreed that they would not show the least elation before the King, nor so much as mention anything in connection with Meersburg in his presence, lest he should be provoked into another attack of illness !

Baron von Stetten was to make all needful preparations, and the King was only to be casually told, at the last moment, that everything was ready. What a day of happiness and rejoicing it would be when the Royal Family should really be installed at Meersburg, and all fear of having to settle in Switzerland or, worse still, in a Moravian Settlement (!), would mercifully be at an end. The latter prospect had nearly driven the Queen distracted. With unfeigned delight she welcomed Baron von Stetten on the morning of the Saturday before Easter. He had come to report to the King that the place was ready for his reception, and that he hoped that he (Baron von Stetten) had not overlooked anything which might conduce to the comfort of the Royal Family and render their stay there as agreeable as possible. The Grand Duke trusted they would find it a comfortable and pleasant abode.

At the time of Stetten's arrival, the King was out on one of his customary long walks with his two eldest children. It was rather a touching sight to see these three start off together or come home. Gustaf Adolf took his usual gigantic strides, and the two children tried their best to keep up with

him. The ten-year-old Prince Gustaf thought it an honour to step out like a man and keep step with his father, who occasionally talked to them, but more often walked along in a brown study which made his strides even longer and more difficult to follow. Prince Gustaf and Princess Sophia had to break into a trot if they did not want to be left behind ; then their father would suddenly remember that he had two children with him, when he would slacken his pace and enter into conversation with them.

They used to come home dead-tired from these walks, which often lasted for hours, over snow-covered fields and marshy meadows, for Gustaf Adolf never thought about the way when he was out.

That Easter Eve the roads were particularly bad ; it had been raining incessantly for several days, and this was the first morning the sun had shown itself again. Queen Frederica cast anxious glances through the window as she sat talking to Baron von Stetten ; she was wondering how it would fare with her children, and how they would manage to scramble out of the mire and slush into which their father was sure to have taken them.

They came in sight at last, and she gave a cry as she saw that the King was carrying Princess Sophia in his arms. "The Princess must have met with an accident," she exclaimed, as she rushed from the room to meet the party. Farther than the steps she dare not go . . . her husband hated a "scene."

But there was no need for alarm ! Prince Gustaf waved his pocket-handkerchief to his mother as he ambled by his father's side. When they came in, the King carefully set down the little Princess, who merrily and triumphantly cried : "Papa carried me quite a long way, Mamma ; my stupid old shoe stuck fast in the bog, so Papa took me up in his arms that I shouldn't be left behind or get too tired. We have been far, far away in the woods, and it was lovely ; the birds sang so loud all the time."

Gustaf Adolf nodded in confirmation. "Yes . . . it was a glorious walk . . . but now be good enough to see that these

children change their shoes and stockings ; I expect they are wet through."

" You should do the same, I am sure ; your feet must be wet too."

" Oh, that won't hurt me," he said carelessly. " Have you anything to tell me ? "

" Only that Baron von Stetten has come over and would like to speak to you."

The Queen had been very pleased to observe that the King was in a particularly good temper after this long promenade.

" Where is he ? In here ? " asked the King. Then he went straightway into the " Yellow " drawing-room where the Baron was waiting.

The Grand Duke's Equerry had never seen the King of Sweden in such a happy and genial frame of mind ; he talked about the delightful walk he had had, and how beautiful the woods had looked after the recent rains . . . and how freely one could breathe, roaming about wherever one liked. Only after this pleasant preamble it occurred to him to ask after Baron von Stetten's business.

The latter found it neither unpleasant nor difficult, after this affable reception, to expatiate at length upon all that had been done at Meersburg ; he also mentioned that the conveyances had all been well greased (*sic !*), so that they were quite ready whenever their Majesties should elect to make use of them.

As has been said before, Gustaf Adolf was in the very best of humours. He let the Baron prose on, and listened with the gravest attention. When that good man had quite finished and the King could get in a word, he said : " I am much obliged for all the trouble you have taken . . . and now I should like to give *you* a message to our grandfather. Give my kindest regards to the Grand Duke, and tell him that . . . I am . . . *not* going to Meersburg."

The unfortunate Equerry could not have been more taken aback if a thunderbolt had that minute fallen at his feet.

" *Not* go to Meersburg ? " he burst out. " Why . . . that is not possible ! "

"Not possible? Well . . . we shall see . . . I am not a prisoner *here*."

The tone was coldly polite . . . but there was a peculiar stress on the little word "*here*."

"When I said 'not possible,' I only meant that I thought Your Majesty would scarcely find a pleasanter residence than Meersburg," stammered the Baron in an awful fright. "The situation is ideal, and there is such a lovely view over the lake on the one side and the Alps on the other."

"I am not keen about a view over the lake, and there is not much of a garden round the castle," added Gustaf Adolf most calmly.

He had made up his mind not to lose his temper, but he meant once for all to make an end of this transaction and worry. He absolutely refused to go to Meersburg, not even for the summer. Judging by the way the Margravine and Queen Frederica spoke about it, he shrewdly suspected that, having once been enticed out there, he would have to remain there for the rest of his life. He meant to have his liberty at all costs . . . he would be *free* . . . untrammelled.

"There are beautiful walks along the lake on the sands, and a good many inland," the Baron assured him.

"But there is no garden," Gustaf Adolf insisted.

"Craving Your Majesty's pardon, just a little way beyond the castle there is a kitchen-garden and an orchard."

"Oh! . . . is . . . there . . . indeed!" said the King dubiously. Then he continued his irritating cross-examination: "And what sort of papers are there on the walls?"

"There are costly old Gobelin tapestries in the best rooms," ingenuously answered the Baron. He began to think that the King perhaps thought Meersburg was not good enough for him.

To his great dismay Gustaf Adolf replied: "Oh, yes, of course, Gobelin tapestries and a fine view over the lake . . . it could not well be more like Gripsholm. I am *not* going there, and I will *not* live there."

The King talked calmly enough, but the Baron was nearly boiling over.

"And what about the stores I have laid in? Some will be utterly spoilt, some will have to be sold for what they will fetch, the rest will have to be thrown away. Has Your Majesty reflected what it would cost to acquire a place where Your Majesty *could* live? Your Majesty's fortune is considerable, but it would take more than a whole year's income to purchase all the things which you can have for nothing there. . . . That expense is unnecessary."

But this was too much for the King, and now he got angry.

"I presume you would like to dictate to me what I am to do and what I am not to do; but I will show you that you are labouring under a very great mistake. I am *not* going to Meersburg, and you can do what you like."

Baron von Stetten could frame no answer to fit this, so he was just about to bow himself out of the room, when Gustaf Adolf stopped him and said: "I have received a communication from a banker of the name of 'Haber,' in Karlsruhe. Do you happen to know anything about him?"

"I do, Your Majesty. He is a rich man, and highly spoken of."

"Do you know that he is a Jew?"

"Certainly, Your Majesty," replied von Stetten, whose mind was so entirely taken up with Gustaf Adolf's determinate refusal to go to Meersburg and with all the worry and trouble this upsetting of plans would occasion him (von Stetten), that he could not get up much interest in the King's misgivings regarding Haber's Hebrew birth.

"I had no idea of it till he came here a little while ago to witness my signature. I asked him of what nationality he was then, and he said he was a Hebrew. It is owing to the State having chosen the Court Jeweller, Benedicks, in Stockholm, who is a Jew, to send me my remittances, that I have come to have dealings with this man Haber."

"Has Your Majesty any complaint to make against him?" asked the Baron, as Gustaf Adolf came to a sudden stop.

"Well, I have. I had a letter from him not long since, in which he 'begs to inform me' that Benedicks has forbidden him paying me out a greater sum than ten thousand florins.

That just shows what trouble I might get into if I had only Jews to rely upon ; so I am writing to my uncle, the King of Sweden, to ask that my financial affairs may be put on a different footing, and that in future I should prefer to deal with Christians only."

"Haber, the banker, is known everywhere as an honest, upright man, and he was right in what he did, as he had no further authority from the bank at Stockholm," answered Baron von Stetten. But here Gustaf Adolf cut short his loyal defence of the Jew by resuming his tramp with his hands behind his back.

"Anyhow," he said after a while, "I am strongly of opinion that it is pleasanter to deal with Christians, and that is why I do not want this man Haber to be mixed up in my affairs. I have answered his letter, though ; I simply said that 'I would not take such information from Haber Sen, the Jew.' And I shall certainly write to my uncle."

In his own mind Baron von Stetten thought that Gustaf Adolf was doing his level best to leave himself, presently, without a roof over his head and without money to pay for one. Aloud he said : "Has Your Majesty any further commands ?"

"No, nothing beyond the message to the Grand Duke, which I have already given you."

At last the Baron was free to go, and his next step must be to communicate what had happened to the Margravine ; then he must jump into his carriage and drive with all speed to Karlsruhe to convey the King of Sweden's astounding message to the Grand Duke.

Hardly had the Baron's carriage gone when, from her window, the Margravine saw a pair of post-horses being led up the drive. For a moment she wondered what that could mean ; then she hurried to her daughter's apartments, where she found her and her husband together.

Before she had time to ask any questions, Gustaf Adolf, turning to her and the Queen, said : "I ordered the post-horses . . . I am starting at once for Basle in search of a suitable dwelling-house."

Queen Frederica turned deadly pale and trembled from head to foot.

"That is the first I have heard about it—you never told me. Oh, let me come with you!" she cried.

"Certainly not," replied Gustaf Adolf sternly. "I am going to take Lieutenant Ekstedt and a couple of men."

"My dear son, I beg of you do not go, but stay here and consider once more," said the Margravine excitedly.

"I *have* considered—and I am going," he answered, in a tone which there was no contradicting. "Good-bye, mother."

He kissed the Margravine's hand as usual, and when he approached the Queen, who was weeping bitterly, he saw that his carriage had come up; so he hastily bent down and imprinted a cold kiss on her forehead.

"Let me go with you! Do not leave me!" she cried, stretching out her arms after him.

"Give my love to the children," Gustaf Adolf replied, and before she had time to dry her tears he was gone.

"Mother, mother! he is leaving us for good . . . he must not, he ought not . . . I will not let him."

"*Ought* not?" said the Margravine, shrugging her shoulders, "If he *says* he is going to Basle to look for a good house, he will certainly go."

"But if he finds one . . . he will not stay there; he has no wish to live in Switzerland. He has always said it was a country he would never care to see; he prefers Germany, especially the north. He said that if he were not allowed to settle at Christiansfeld as being too far north (too near Sweden), the Moravian Brethren had branches elsewhere, at Herrenhut, in Saxony, and Neuwied, on the Rhine. He was only telling me, just before you came in, that he had quite made up his mind to settle in one of them, even if he should be forced to be parted from all of us," sobbed the Queen.

"If it were I, I should certainly infinitely prefer Meersburg," answered the Margravine, who had indulged in rather cross and threatening gestures as she stood by the window watching her son-in-law's departure.

"Oh, now he is going . . . don't let me see . . . don't let

me hear ! ” and the poor distracted Queen buried her face in the cushions and put her fingers in her ears. There was silence for a time ; then, still sobbing, she said : “ How did he look when he started, mother ? ”

“ Uncommonly pleased and cheerful, I must confess,” said the Margravine, patting her daughter on the shoulders. “ But *you*, my dear child . . . you seem to take this separation so much to heart, that one would almost be tempted to believe that you are desperately in love with your husband—and whatever anyone may say, he assuredly is not a very lovable gentleman.”

“ If he is not so fascinating as the Emperor Alexander, he is anyhow a man who can hold his head proudly, whether it bears a crown or not. . . . Yes, mother, I *do* love him dearly, and I am not ashamed of confessing it either.”

“ Well . . . to be sure ! . . . Times *do* change ! ” ejaculated the Margravine. “ But go and bathe your eyes now, dear child, that your people may not see you have been crying, or they might think something terrible was the matter . . . and there *isn't*.”

“ This is only the beginning of the end . . . I know it ! ” cried the Queen, wringing her hands.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE WONDERFUL WAYS OF PROVIDENCE

BASLE, being a most delightful old city on the banks of the Rhine, surrounded by moats, battlements, and ancient walls, with countless and varied walks in its beautiful environs, Gustaf Adolf appeared to be enjoying himself within its precincts. He seemed to revel in the sense of his newly regained liberty after his long confinement in the castle of Gripsholm, followed by the constant and watchful supervision of the Queen's relatives at Bruchsal, who were anxious to arrange and settle his future plans for him. He felt as though he had never fully tasted the sweets of liberty until now, when he could roam about the tortuous lanes at will, and gaze, long and earnestly, at the magnificent red-brick cathedral, the ancient fountain in the market-place, and the many curious and antiquated buildings. He enjoyed being able to ramble where he liked unmolested, and yet he was pleased, also, that his personality was sufficiently well known not to be entirely overlooked. The obvious desire of the inhabitants to make his stay among them as agreeable as possible also afforded him a certain amount of gratification. He inspected several estates which were put up either for sale or hire, and his choice fell on the lovely property of a Colonel Burcard, with its tastefully laid-out grounds and comfortable dwelling-house. As the owner spent most of his time in the country, this place was to be let, and if Gustaf Adolf did not immediately jump at the offer, it was because he considered he was very well off as he was, and need not be in any hurry to make up his mind to send for his belongings.

In his solitary wanderings it also recurred to him how often

his wife had expressed her dislike to living in Switzerland, although he well knew that she neither could nor would refuse to come, but if she only did so from compulsion or a sense of wifely duty, he thought it would not be pleasant. He was not entirely free from worry either, for his financial affairs had not been arranged as had been promised. Time after time had he written to his uncle about them, but had received no reply. Queen Frederica also wrote many anxious letters to him (Gustaf Adolf) on the subject, from Bruchsal and Karlsruhe. The banker at the latter place had produced a letter from the Bank in Sweden authorising him to pay to the King ten thousand florins and no more, pending the final settlement of affairs, whereupon Gustaf Adolf had informed the Queen that there must be no further expenses, and that four, at least, of their present retainers must be summarily dismissed. In reply, she wrote that she had been obliged to run into debt, and that it was totally impossible for her to get on without remittances. The only way the King could see of paying off these debts was to pawn some of his jewellery, which he promptly did.

Once, indeed, the Queen had been on the point of coming to Basle with her children and suite ; the farewell visits in Karlsruhe had been duly paid, and all goods and chattels were ready packed for the journey, when an express messenger from Gustaf Adolf arrived, with a letter forbidding their departure. 'This greatly perturbed Her Majesty, and when the messenger she despatched to the King from Karlsruhe with a reply in due time returned, saying he had not been able to find His Majesty, the consternation of the Margravine, the Queen, and all concerned, was so great that another courier was sent off that same evening with instructions to track the King, wherever he might be, and deliver to him a most serious letter, to which an answer would be required, as to his intentions, whether he ever *meant* his family to join him or not.

At this juncture a very unexpected event happened which entirely upset his plans with regard to settling in Switzerland. In a German newspaper he came across a paragraph announcing the death, from a stroke of paralysis, of the Crown-Prince Elect of Sweden, Carl August, on the plains of Qvidinge, in Skåne.

With regard to the former Prince Carl Christian Augustus of Augustenburg, Gustaf Adolf from the first moment of his (the Prince's) election as Crown-Prince of Sweden, had been fully convinced that *he* would nominate Prince Gustaf as *his* successor to the throne ; it was even possible that he might abdicate in his favour. His grounds for this supposition were that Prince Charles of Augustenburg was universally known to be a man of unimpeachable principles, and that, being so, he would on no account turn the consequences of a revolution, which had involved the fall of a Sovereign of the same house as himself, to his own advantage.

That Prince having been so unexpectedly called to his last account, Gustaf Adolf felt sure that the Divine Providence now intended to steer the Royal cause in Sweden aright (!). To his credit be it spoken, he had no thought for himself at this crisis—he was anxious only for his son's future. The sudden demise of the Heir-Apparent would prove to the Swedes how wrongly they had acted in depriving Prince Gustaf of his just inheritance, and in setting aside himself, their rightful King.

Now, indeed, the eyes of the whole kingdom, with King Carl and Queen Hedwig Elisabeth Charlotte at the head, would be opened, and, seeing in this catastrophe the unerring finger of God, they would at once proceed to elect Prince Gustaf as the next heir. To this end he indicted a lengthy epistle to his uncle, putting before him without reserve that this would in truth be the only means of saving the kingdom from total ruin. Once again Gustaf Adolf experienced the blessed feeling that he was in special touch with the Divine Being ; it brought unwonted calm to his spirit to know that he could set his mind at rest, and follow only that heavenly guidance, instead of lying low and, so to say, simply vegetating with his family in some dull little Swiss town, or at the no less dull Court of some petty German Prince. Certainly this was no fitting time for making arrangements to establish himself and his household at Basle or in any other Swiss town.

The King's imagination was fired at once ; in case Prince Gustaf *should* be nominated heir to the throne of Sweden, the Queen would certainly refuse to be parted from her only

son, but would readily consent to accompany him back and remain there with her daughters. If so, he himself would naturally not elect to stay in a country so near to the borders of that Power which seemed destined to tyrannise all Europe. No ; if all should fall out as his fancy pictured it, he knew very well to what harbour of rest he meant to betake himself, where he would be amply compensated for all the misery and troubles which had fallen to his lot.

But no answer came from King Carl, either with regard to that most important question of subsidies or the even more pressing one referring to the "only means for saving the kingdom from total ruin," and Gustaf Adolf felt that he must not remain an idle spectator, but hasten to the scene of action, and do his utmost to help in accomplishing the (to him) plainly revealed designs of Providence ! His desire was irresistible, and his preparations were soon made. His idea was to go through Northern Germany and inquire at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin whether Baron Taube had faithfully forwarded his letters to Stockholm ; if need were, he would there await the reply to their important contents. Thereupon he wrote to Baron Taube (the Swedish Ambassador) suggesting the little town of Wittenberg, in Saxony, as a suitable place for meeting. Should the Baron, however, not think it feasible to go beyond Prussian territory, Gustaf Adolf would be quite willing to proceed to Berlin. In this proposal he was actuated by another motive also, that of pleading personally with the King of Prussia on behalf of his son's succession.

Nothing must be neglected that could possibly be done with this end in view. It also struck him that the Queen might be persuaded to put in a good word for the election of her son as Heir-Apparent to the throne of his forbears, with her brother-in-law, the Emperor of Russia, and he wrote an impressive epistle on the subject, addressed to the castle of Scheibenhart, near Karlsruhe, where the Queen and her children were then staying, summoning her to his presence at Schaffhausen.

Queen Frederica was delighted beyond measure when she received this letter ; it was towards the end of July, the most beautiful season of the year, and nothing could be more alluring

than the prospect of a change from the seclusion and dullness of Scheibenhart, which, indeed, bore more resemblance to a big farmhouse than anything in the way of a castle. Moreover, her beloved mother was to be her companion on the journey. The Margravine herself took a keen interest in the prospective election of her grandson, and was anxious to be the first to know the results. But the Queen's greatest joy was the thought that her husband had sent for her! and she determined to do all in her power to make the meeting at Schaffhausen as agreeable as possible; this was not difficult, as the King's mind was wholly occupied with the chances of his son's nomination.

It did not take long to persuade Queen Frederica that this election would terminate as it must and should do if justice were still to be found on this earth; she was not, however, quite clear in her own mind as to what *she* wished. Naturally she desired that her adored son should be restored to the position which was his right by birth; at the same time she had no wish to leave her husband, and to return with her children to the land from which they had been driven as exiles. Yet so it would have to be, if the nation's choice fell upon Prince Gustaf, and that it could not fail to do so was a foregone conclusion of her husband's. But when she gently and tentatively remarked that she would rather accompany him to Basle, or any other place, than be parted from him and leave him in loneliness, since he could not come to Sweden, he had callously replied: "I will not go with you, and I shall not feel at all lonely."

Had there been the least tone of regret or affection in these words, the Queen thought they would not have hurt her so much; as it was, there had been only a kind of triumph and relief in his manner of uttering them, and she felt that it was his one aim to be rid of her and his children, and so be able to enjoy his freedom to the full. She grew hot with indignation, and would have made a hard and angry answer had she not suddenly remembered what a devoted father he had been, and that he must have retained some remnant of love for her also, or why had he written and commanded her to come? If she could have lived with this man for a hundred years, she thought,

she could never have fathomed his enigmatical nature ! At times, when she had had the misfortune to rouse his displeasure, he had been wont to say that there existed not a grain of sympathy between his temperament and hers, and this, probably, was at the bottom of the many differences and difficulties which so constantly sprang up between them. However that may have been, just now they were living in perfect harmony ; the King was in a better frame of mind than he had been for a long time, and it was with many genuine expressions of hope that they might soon meet again, that the Royal couple took leave of each other, the King to proceed to Berlin, the Queen to return to Scheibenhart to her children.

Once again Gustaf Adolf was ensconced in a corner of his travelling carriage, his restlessness worse than ever. He seemed to imagine that his son's future depended wholly and solely upon this journey of his, and the steps he should take with the Court of Berlin. From certain German papers he had gleaned that the Duke of Augustenburg had also been proposed as Heir-Apparent to the throne of Sweden, and that the King of Denmark, too, had a strong party to support his claim ; and he was aware that nothing could be done in Sweden without the knowledge and consent of the Emperor of the French ; *that* he was powerless to prevent. All he could do, and was bound to do, was to dilate upon the laws of right and legitimacy, and to champion, as far as in him lay, the claims of the wrongfully set-aside heir, still a minor, in Germany. When the last heir, who had now been so suddenly cut off in his prime by the hand of God, had been chosen, Gustaf Adolf had sat a prisoner, in durance vile, at Gripsholm, unable to interfere in any way ; now God had restored to him his liberty that he might act. On the journey from Switzerland to Berlin he adopted the name of "Count of Gottorp" ; for all his eagerness and haste, he occasionally had doubts and misgivings whether it would be for his son's happiness if he *were* called to rule over a people which had proved so faithless to himself ; but one thing he was sure of, and that was that he could not stand by and see wrong triumph over right, and that all loyal-minded men must be ready to unite

and help him carry out the work so clearly indicated to him by the Almighty.

The Swedish Ambassador was not a little dismayed and perplexed when, on the morning of August 3rd, he saw Gustaf Adolf descend from his carriage at his gates, and heard his proposal that they should both, without delay, drive out some way beyond the town, where they could converse in privacy; and as Baron Taube was not inclined to act upon this suggestion, his unwelcome visitor remained the whole of the day at the Embassy, writing and copying letters, and scheming how best he could compass a meeting with the King of Prussia, Frederick Wilhelm. Either Baron Taube was too much taken up with his own concerns to pay much attention to the dethroned monarch's wishes, or the King of Prussia had not forgotten the awkward corner into which the present "Count of Gottorp" had put him, not many years before, as King of Sweden; suffice it to say that Frederick Wilhelm sent a message by one of his Adjutants to the effect that, having just lost his Queen, his great grief prevented his receiving any visitors. But although Frederick Wilhelm really was in deep mourning, besides having distinctly unpleasant recollections, he did not wish to be guilty of any lack of courtesy towards the stranger, and finally sent his brother, Prince Wilhelm, to the inn where Gustaf Adolf had put up.

When Prince Wilhelm entered the King's apartment he beheld the figure of a tall, thin man, wearing the red uniform of the Maltese Regiment, deeply engrossed in reading the Bible, which lay upon his knees. As the Prince was announced the man looked up from his book: his face, with the large hook-nose, was deadly pale, the fair, flaxen hair brushed straight off his face, and the light blue eyes fixed so searchingly upon the intruder, that Prince Wilhelm almost staggered as the King rose to receive him. From a deathlike pallor his face assumed a deep purple hue as he worked himself up with eagerness and excitement on his son's behalf; the steely-blue eyes burned with unwonted fire, as with trembling voice, and in language largely taken from the sacred volume he had just closed, he endeavoured to impress upon the Prince that it was the duty

of all legitimate rulers and potentates to espouse the cause of Prince Gustaf.

Never in all his life had Prince Wilhelm been face to face with such an extraordinary person nor such extraordinary arguments, and he found it difficult to control his nervousness and reply as he had been instructed to do from head-quarters. When at last he could get in a word, he promised to lay Gustaf Adolf's requests before his brother, but reminded him at the same time, in very plain words, that the King of Prussia *personally* had no power to interfere in the matter, and that anything concerning Prince Gustaf could only be settled in Sweden.

"That is precisely what Baron Taube has told me already," replied Gustaf Adolf, turning away.

On the following day the "Count of Gottorp" left Berlin for Leipzig; on his arrival in that city he found a kind and friendly letter from his uncle awaiting him. He tore it open hastily, but it contained not a single word regarding the choice of Prince Gustaf.

Thus, the sudden decease of the Crown-Prince Carl August did not, after all, seem to greatly further the fortunes of Prince Gustaf; indeed, it would, perhaps, have been better had he been spared, as he might have been talked over into adopting Prince Gustaf, and thus have paved the way for his ultimate succession to the Swedish throne.

The King's hopes were considerably damped by his aged uncle's pointed manner of totally ignoring the all-important question of an Heir-Apparent, and by his making no allusion whatever to his (the King's) proposed journey to Berlin. His sanguine trust that all would finally go well faded as swiftly as it had sprung up. While still on the throne he had, in spite of his waywardness and obstinacy, shown a wonderful power of bearing disappointment, as long as he could discover the veriest trifle which would exonerate him from having brought it on himself, or as long as he could find some comfort in a new hopeful, promising scheme, and in the depths of his present misery it suddenly flashed upon him that Providence had led him through these thorny and devious paths only that he might, in the end, find a smoother and more certain road. Why strain

every nerve to win an earthly crown for his son, when it seemed clear that Providence did not intend that that son's brow should be encircled with a perishable one? It was another sort of crown which Prince Gustaf's father was to win for his son.

In fact, it was his duty to set out for Herrenhut at once.

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We next find Gustaf Adolf calmly sitting in a simple room in the village of Herrenhut. The room was spacious, it is true, but furnished with the utmost simplicity. The huge, white-painted deal table had been moved close to the window; through the many small leaded panes the sun shone brightly on a geranium, its sole adornment, and from where the King sat there was a fine view of the simple but prosperous-looking buildings pertaining to the Moravian community. On one side were the houses set apart for the "Brethren," on the other side those for the "Sisters." The streets were almost deserted now during the busy part of the day, though occasionally two or three of the Brethren would issue from their house, apparently holding serious converse; sometimes, too, a few of the Sisters, young as well as old, would gather in front of their own special dwelling. If Brethren and Sisters met by chance, they greeted each other courteously, and frequently stopped to exchange a few kindly words. By their reverent demeanour and grave looks the King concluded that these were of a spiritual kind. The young men and women who dwelt here all seemed to bear that stamp of chaste respect for each other, that silent dignity of conduct and seriousness of purpose which the King himself so much approved of between the sexes.

Gustaf Adolf heaved a deep sigh; then he rose, took several sheets of paper out of his despatch-box, laid them in order in front of him on the table, and then commenced writing a letter to the King of Sweden.

"HERRENHUT, August 19th, 1810.

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"After I wrote to Your Majesty from Leipzig I took a journey to Wörlitz, to have a look at the beautiful park. I also

thought I might meet the aged Duke of Dessau there, but he was absent, being on his way to Vienna. As I know no merchant in the south of Germany from whom I could borrow money, and the long delay of your reply relating to my inquiries about certain particulars as to my financial affairs making it impossible for me to stay in the north of Germany, I have come to a place where the Moravian Brethren have one of their largest settlements. I arrived here on the sixteenth, have been present at some of their divine services, and have inspected their institutions. As you, Uncle, are already acquainted with the peculiar ceremonial of the Brethren, I will only add that, in point of solemnity and reverence, it quite exceeds one's expectations. The houses are patterns of cleanliness, order, and simplicity, as are also their services, which are rendered doubly attractive by the exquisite music and singing. I have also been over one of their seminaries for young men, not far from here. At the present time fifteen youths, mostly all of noble birth, are being trained there, and judging from what I saw at Hennersdorf, I should think the education and the whole tone of the establishment well calculated to turn out virtuous, God-fearing men. My real purpose in inspecting this place was to see whether I might find a lodging there for my son, convinced as I am that there he would get an education suitable to the situation in which such unforeseen and calamitous circumstances have placed him. I trust I may succeed in getting him admitted, as my pure and honest intention is to instil into his young mind such principles as are befitting the profession of a true Christian." Here the King ceased for a while, and fell into deep thought; then he put the same date as before, August 19th. This done, he covered his eyes with his hands, in order not to see the beautiful flower-clad hamlets on the slopes of the Hutberg, which he had so much admired but a short time since. For a long while he sat thus, his head supported on his hands and his elbows resting on the white-painted table.

Then he took up his pen afresh and proceeded to add a few words to his letter.

"With great emotion I now recollect that on this very day,

eight-and-thirty years ago, Sweden was saved as by a miracle from impending destruction.” Then he pushed away his chair and began to pace the room as usual.

When Gustaf Adolf’s uncle perused this letter and read the reference to what had happened in Sweden eight-and-thirty years ago, he thought of the day preceding that on which this letter had been penned at Herrenhut, namely, August 18th, the date on which he, now King Charles XIII, had presented Marshal Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte Corvo, to the Representatives of the States at Örebro, as his successor to the throne of Sweden. Apparently King Charles XIII did not care to pursue his train of thought further, but he had an uncomfortable kind of feeling as he re-folded his nephew’s letter, and put it aside among other papers.

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Gustaf Adolf, meanwhile, remained at Herrenhut anxiously awaiting the reply of the Head of the Brethren of the Pedagogium (College) for the sons of the nobility at Hennersdorf, who were debating whether they should admit Prince Gustaf or not. To his great disappointment he was informed that the Brethren had widely diverging views as to the feasibility of admitting the Royal student, and the King began to fear that he must no longer think of this peaceful retreat for his son. Herrenhut seemed to suit himself marvellously well; at the same time he wrote to Queen Frederica, bidding her bring the two eldest children and suite to join him at Weimar.

If there had been a chance of Prince Gustaf’s being admitted to Hennersdorf, the King had intended to settle at Herrenhut with his wife and daughters precisely on the same footing as other families within the Moravian area, for, seeing the irregularity of his remittances from Sweden, and their small amount when they *did* reach him, he could think of no other way of living with his kindred, and that only with the strictest economy and many privations.

With these harassing reflections in his mind, he wandered about the pretty villages and lovely environs and, though not only the brethren but also most of the inhabitants, knew that

the austere-looking man in the black coat, who so devoutly joined in their worship and took such a keen interest in everything relating to them, had once been a powerful Sovereign, no one molested him with undue attention or curiosity, but continued their occupation or devotion as if he had simply been one of themselves. They were well aware that his wish was to live among them, and to see his son received into their community.

After many days of careful consideration on the part of the Brethren, he received a letter from the Head of the College regretting that there was no vacancy for the former King of Sweden's son. With a feeling of desperation at his continued failures in doing anything for his boy, be it procuring for him his rightful heritage or trying to find him a quiet hidden retreat, King Gustaf Adolf called for his travelling-coach and set out to meet his Consort.

On leaving Herrenhut it suddenly occurred to him that he was in total ignorance as to how the question of the succession in Sweden had finally ended. It might be that the Almighty, in His inscrutable wisdom, might have decreed that if he were disappointed in his wish at Herrenhut, the disappointment should be made up to him by the fulfilment of the other long-cherished wish with regard to his son.

But he was not fated to indulge in these alluring prospects for any length of time, for with extreme wrath and disappointment he presently read in a German paper how the iniquitous choice of a successor to the throne of Sweden had at last been fixed upon. His son had been set aside, not for a Danish King, not even for another Prince of Augustenburg—he had been passed over for a Frenchman! A French Marshal, a creature of Buonaparte's, was to be set on the Swedish throne! How could a man understand the ways of Providence when, both in public and private life, nothing ever seemed to go as it ought to do! Now, though it was pain and grief to him, Gustaf Adolf quite gave up the idea of settling at Herrenhut, either alone or with his family, since the Brethren had insulted him by their refusal to admit his son into their college. Never, to such a degree, had the King experienced the conflict between

his ardent desire for peace and quiet and the feverish anxiety for the future, which seemed to gnaw his very vitals. In order that no one should be defrauded in any way, he thought he must retrench his own and his family's expenses as much as possible . . . and he must begin at once. So he sat down and wrote to his Consort to tell her to meet him at Altenburg instead of at Weimar, and that she must send away the governess, Fröken von Panhuys. "I cannot afford to keep a governess for my daughters," he said. The next few days, and after his arrival at Altenburg, he seemed to grow more and more depressed, and when Queen Frederica, with her two eldest children and suite, met him there, she saw at a glance what a morose and irritable humour he was in. As soon as they were alone, he asked her angrily why she stood there looking like a mute at a funeral and on the verge of tears. . . . She dared not tell him the real reason, that she was so grieved at having had to dismiss her faithful friend, Fröken von Panhuys. The King interrupted her rudely, and said that every Swede about them would have to be sent away before *he* could enjoy any rest or peace. . . . They must all go. . . . Pastor Holm, Doctors Sjöbesk, Ekstedt, and Westerman—they must all, all go.

"I will have nothing more to do with any Swede, and they need not worry because they are giving me an apanage for life . . . nor will I have anything more to do with that doomed country, which I pity and despise. I shall make over my private property in Sweden to you and the children, and I trust my mother will remember her grandchildren. . . . I will not have a single Swede near me, and to-morrow I shall give them marching orders—one and all. I can't afford a suite as it is."

He was so excited, and spoke so fiercely, that the Queen nearly wept with fright and alarm; but instead she tried to soothe him, by saying in the gentlest way: "Would it not be better to think it over a little before you part with all those who have voluntarily followed us into exile? I know how hard it was to part from Fröken von Panhuys, who had been my comfort and companion in my loneliness, and all through my recent troubles." Here she took her vinaigrette out of her reticule and put it to her nose.

Gustaf Adolf stopped abruptly, and said : " Ah, yes . . . and, instead of our son, they have chosen an upstart, whom they had to beg from Napoleon, to mount my throne ! I have heard, though, that he is a decent sort of a man."

The Queen shrugged her shoulders, and said : " His father is supposed to have been a grocer at Pau. I rather wonder how the haughty Swedish nobility will get on with their new Crown-Prince ! "

" You are wrong there ; his father was not a grocer, he was a lawyer. It was his wife's father who had a grocery business at Marseilles ; his son was born the same year as our Gustaf and he it is who will one day be . . . and for *my* son I have not even been able to get admission to Hennersdorf, which was my greatest wish. Ugh ! . . . mysterious, truly, are the ways of Providence ! "

Gustaf Adolf, whilst talking, had taken the vinaigrette from the Queen's hand and kept nervously opening and shutting it.

" I cannot say that I regret that so much," said the Queen, holding out her hand for her vinaigrette ; " I should have been very sorry to see my son grow up a Moravian."

" Then I suppose you are mighty glad that you won't have to see it," sneered the King, as he closed the little trinket with a vicious snap that made its owner start.

" No—I am not particularly glad ; I am never glad about anything now."

" Ah well, things may improve, and you may soon be happier again," answered Gustaf Adolf, going to the door.

" Where are you going ? " she asked in alarm.

" I am going to see about dismissing our suite," he replied curtly ; " to-morrow they will all have to go."

" Every one ? " asked the Queen.

" Of course, you and the children will have to keep a couple of men and women servants to wait on you, and for the present I shall keep my man."

Then followed two or three bad days for the suite at Allenburg ; the King was in a diabolical humour, and treated them to the grossest insults and most bitter reproaches. He told

them it would have been less shameful to make Sweden a dependency of *Russia* at once than to accept a *Frenchman* for a King. He also informed them that he should know no peace nor rest until the whole lot of them were gone !

He had quarrelled with nearly all of them at one time or another, but just now he and the Queen seemed on the best of terms. It was late in the afternoon of the third day of their stay at Altenburg. The Queen had disrobed, and was sitting looking over the fields in the clear, bright light of the moon, which shone also on the beautiful old castle on the summit of the rocks. It was a lovely view, and when Gustaf Adolf entered the room she called him to the window and said in her most bewitching manner : “ Look what a beautiful night, and what a glorious moon ! ”

She had loosely cast a pink cape trimmed with fine lace over her shoulders, and as she turned her beautiful eyes towards her husband he forgot his troubles for the moment, and bending down, clasped her tightly in his arms.

But she tried to free herself, and cried : “ No, no—no more.”

But he would not be denied ; with his icy cold hands he pushed back the curls from her forehead and imprinted a passionate kiss upon her fair face and neck, she resisting all the while.

“ I don’t want you,” she cried, giving a hard nip to the arm with which he held her encircled.

“ How often have I to remind you that you are my wife, and belong to me ? ” he said crossly.

“ I suppose the sole privilege and duty of a wife is to bear her husband children. . . . Do not be angry with me, but listen to me a moment. I am your devoted wife, and would follow you to the ends of the earth, in poverty and want, but I trust I shall bear no more children doomed to exile and disgrace.”

Gustaf Adolf turned pale and stared at his wife, but he neither stirred nor spoke.

Queen Frederica sobbed and hid her face in her hands—but when she saw him standing there like a statue, she was frightened, got up, and went to him ; gently she laid her hand on his arm.

"Don't touch me!" he cried wildly, then he pushed her aside and rushed from the room.

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The Queen had flung herself upon her bed after this trying scene, and had fallen asleep. As the turret clock struck five she was roused by the rattling of wheels in the drive, and being still but half-awake she could not quite make out what it could be. The grey blinds were still down, and she lay vacantly gazing on the shepherds and shepherdesses portrayed thereon. The shepherdesses were accompanied by lambs, which they led by brightly-coloured ribbons, and the shepherds carried crooks bedecked with flowers. Then she thought she heard footsteps on the creaking stairs. Who could be going out so early? In a trice she was at the window . . . good heavens! Who was it going out? She tried to pull up the blinds, but the cords had got caught somewhere, and try as she would she could *not* get them up! Then she heard wheels grinding on the gravel below . . . she gave one pull more, and . . . down fell the blind, and she beheld Gustaf Adolf on the point of driving away. Before she could open the window or call, the landau had disappeared out of sight!

She uttered one sharp cry, and then sank fainting on the floor.

There her maidens found her, carried her to a couch, and administered restoratives. When she at last came-to, her first words were: "The King has gone. . . . I must go to him."

She ordered her carriage and went after him, first to Leipzig—then to Naumburg—but he had had too great a start, and she failed to overtake him.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE COUNT OF GOTTORP

THE Baroness Christina Georgina Louisa Selby (*née* Falbe), wife of the Danish Ambassador at the Court of King Jerome, was sitting in her boudoir at Cassel, making sundry entries in her diary.

Her goose-quill went scratching along at great speed, for on this memorable September 5th there were many things to be written in that book, so daintily bound in blue velvet and bearing her monogram in silver. The boudoir itself was a charming room, decorated in the Pompeiian style, with all sorts of genii disporting themselves among garlands of flowers and foliage, painted on panels with a red ground, and the Baroness sat writing at a small inlaid table, a very gem of its kind.

The setting sun sent its golden rays on the subtly scented paper before her.

"This day," she wrote, "we had a most unexpected and interesting visitor. About half-past ten of the clock this forenoon, a travelling carriage drew up at our door; an officer in Danish uniform alighted, followed by another, the 'Count of Gottorp,' who, as everyone knows, is none other than the deposed King of Sweden. We *had* heard that he had been in England in the early part of this year to recover some money he had invested there when he was King, but being King no longer, they had refused to pay it out to him. Some people said there was not a word of truth in *that* story, and that he went to England with a view of settling there, but for some reason or other he had found it would not do. That is as it may be, but one thing is certain, and that is that he disposed of a good many of his valuables there, on the proceeds of which

he is now living. He came from Tönningen accompanied by a Danish captain of the name of Mushardt, travelling in an open landau with a Danish passport as far as Hamburg, after which he used a French one. When he came in, after having been announced as 'Count Gottorp,' the first thing he said to my husband was that he was to tell his (Gottorp's) Royal cousin, King Frederick VI (of Denmark) that he 'kissed his feet' (that was the ridiculous expression he used !), and that Selby was to thank his Sovereign in the name of the 'Count of Gottorp' for the kindness he had shown him, which he would never forget ; he added also that he (Gottorp) had considered it his first duty on arriving to call on the representative of the monarch, whom he henceforward looked upon as his legitimate liege-lord, now that he had 'washed his hands,' so to say, of Sweden, and severed his connection with that country for ever.

"Naturally, we received the 'Count of Gottorp' with the respectful consideration due to an unfortunate Sovereign ; one, moreover, so closely related to our own most gracious King.

"The Count was good enough to remind Selby that many years ago he had been presented to him at Stockholm, which must have been when Selby was twenty-one, and Attaché to the Danish Legation.

"It has often been remarked that kings and princes seem to possess singularly good memories . . . certainly it is so in this case. The erstwhile King of Sweden remembers not only the most trivial events, but even the names and faces of people he saw years and years ago ; we had some astonishing proofs of that whilst he was here.

"He remained with us whilst waiting for a relay of post-horses, and we had luncheon served in the meantime. He said he had come to Holstein direct from Heligoland, and had had a great desire to have an interview with his cousin, the King of Denmark ; he considered Holstein almost as his native soil, as it had *de facto*, been the cradle of his ancestors, and that therefore he counted himself a Danish subject, and intended to request the King's permission to take up his permanent abode in Holstein, as he never wished to see Sweden again, either as King or otherwise.

“Without being told, we knew very well that for many and cogent reasons our gracious Sovereign had not had any desire for an interview, nor approved his cousin’s plan for settling in Holstein, and had found means to have it gently hinted to him to leave his (Frederick VI’s) dominions as soon as he could.

“It was rather pathetic when Gustaf Adolf said to Selby, with a somewhat rueful and solemn expression of countenance : ‘You behold in me a knight-errant, homeless, and a wanderer, seeking some haven of rest.’

“Then he went on to find much fault, both with Sweden and England. Of the latter country, he said that the climate was most unhealthy, and that the English way of living did not suit him at all ; and since manners and customs are generally supposed to be an index to the character of a nation, the character of the English was certainly antagonistic to his own. He spoke with a certain deference and respect of Bernadotte, but never gave him his title as ‘Crown-Prince.’ When Selby addressed him as ‘Your Majesty,’ he deprecated the title, and begged to be simply called ‘Count’ ; yet when he himself spoke of his Consort it was always as ‘the Queen.’ When I asked him whether he were now on his way to join her and his children at Karlsruhe, he replied : ‘No, I am *not* ; I have no good news to tell them, so I shall not go to them. I am *en route* for Basle. . . . It is my intention to settle in Switzerland, and there, “the world forgetting and of the world forgot,” to end my days in peace.’

“Then he sat for a long time studying a map and tracing out the road to Basle. As I looked at his hands as they wandered along the map, they seemed very thin and frail and useless. He wore a blue overcoat and big top-boots, and reminded one altogether of an officer of the *Ancien Régime*.

“When the jobmaster sent word that he would send him four horses instead of three, he requested Selby to decline the offer. ‘As I have only my own private fortune to live upon, I must avoid all needless expenses,’ he said. Captain Mushardt informed us that throughout their journey he (Count G.) had insisted on paying for everything, although his purse was but scantily lined.

“We were much impressed by all he said and did, and even

now I feel a mist before my eyes when I think of him. I cannot say enough of his amiability, his patience, and his complete resignation to the Will of Providence.

"As I have now put down all that is worth remembering of his visit, I will, in conclusion, only repeat the words which came to our lips when we had seen him to his carriage and bidden him farewell. 'Well, he certainly *is* every inch a King!' we exclaimed, both at the same moment."

Here the Baroness laid down her pen; the sun had set, and it was too dark to write any more; besides, the good lady loved to sit in the twilight and think upon the past . . . she was doing so now.

At the house of the Danish Ambassador Gustaf Adolf had not talked about his "wife," only about the "Queen." Why? He no longer thought of her as his "wife" either, and was even then seeking a separation from her.

When in Holstein he had already written to his uncle, the King of Sweden, intimating that he desired a judicial separation, and both he (Charles XIII) and the Queen-Mother had written oft and seriously to dissuade him from such a step.

Gustaf Adolf spent the whole day after his arrival at Basle at his writing-table. He wrote to his mother to the effect that he no longer wished to accept the apanage voted to him by the States, and that from that time forward his wife (who had been) must look after her own and her children's rights in Sweden, and claim everything there which was her private and personal property.

He also wrote a farewell letter to the Queen.

But *she* refused to agree to a separation, and his own mother took up the cudgels on her daughter-in-law's behalf. She wrote to her son in these words: "I most earnestly beg of you to act upon the advice of the King,* and not to sever yourself from a wife who has so consistently fulfilled her duties to yourself and your children, and to whom you, at one time, appeared so devoted. You do not know, my dear son, with what esteem and affection she has always spoken of you, and I cannot think

* Charles XIII.

of it without tears. In Switzerland, where it is the King's wish that you should remain, you could spend many happy, restful days in the bosom of your family."

Gustaf Adolf had replied to his mother as he had to his uncle, only in rather more refined and choice language. He said that ever since her arrival in Germany the Queen had shown a decided disinclination to go to Switzerland; and "as I was last year forced to leave Sweden, and deprived of my income from that country in a grossly insulting manner, everything has tended to confirm me in my resolve to separate from a wife whom I cannot make happy, and who is bound to make *me* most miserable. Thirteen years' experience of married life have taught me that, mentally and physically, I shall know neither peace nor rest until we part. At the present moment, and at my age, no one can accuse me of being thoughtless or flighty—even in my younger days I was never that way inclined; but I am a man, with the feelings of a man, who truly desires to make his spouse happy, but who also expects her to return that love and affection without which marriage can be nothing but a failure."

Such was the tenor of his letter, and nothing the Queen could say would turn him from his purpose; opposition rather seemed to strengthen it. He wanted to have nothing more to do with his wife's relatives, of whom *she* seemed inordinately fond, and he was particularly upset when Queen Frederica's grandfather, the venerable, aged Grand Duke of Baden, died that summer, and her brother Karl, with whom the King had never been on very friendly terms, succeeded him; he certainly had a huge respect for his clever mother-in-law, the Margravine, but he resented her continual interference in his affairs; nor did he wish to expose his children to the restless, roving life which the Queen so cordially detested. He was not slow in detecting that her bitter speeches and reproaches anent that kind of life were mostly, though covertly, meant for *him*. In any case he meant to be separated from her, and to have perfect freedom of action, and towards the end of January he despatched a Swiss officer to her with a copy of the deed of separation.

She could now no longer resist his obstinate will, so she sent her legal adviser, Baron von Berckheim, to Basle with full powers to act for her.

He sought the King in his own apartments, and now stood bowing before him as he handed him a thick, official-looking envelope containing documents from Karlsruhe. As Gustaf Adolf took them from him, he mumbled something about having to see to the fire, and went into the adjoining room, taking the papers with him. . . . The truth was that he wished to peruse and digest the Queen's letter without being disturbed ; so he took a chair in front of the fire and stared for a long time at the envelope in his hand before he bethought him of breaking the seals. It was a bleak, blustering day, and he tried to get a little warmth whilst reading, but the logs were damp, there was a great draught, and the room was full of smoke. He rose impatiently, went to the window and threw it wide open, in spite of the intense cold. When the smoke *and* soot had subsided a little, he drew a deep breath and then sat down again, not by the fire, but by the open window, and with great deliberation began to break the numerous seals of the packet on his knee. The big snowflakes came in merrily, and danced around him as he commenced to read the Queen's letter, which was in the French language, and the contents of which were as follows :

" WE, Queen Frederica Dorothea Wilhelmina, *née* Princess of Baden, do hereby declare and affirm, in the presence of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Baden, Our beloved Brother, and His Serene Highness Frederick of Baden, Our beloved Uncle, who both have appended their names and signatures hereunto, that in spite of the reproaches heaped not only upon Our own Person, but also upon that of Our beloved Mother, Her Serene Highness the Margravine of Baden, by His Excellency Gustaf Adolf, Count of Gottorp, who desires to be separated from Us, without having valid or reasonable grounds for such desire, WE, prompted by the unfailing devotion which so closely bound, and at this sorrowful time even still more closely binds Us to His Excellency the Count of Gottorp, have up to this day strenuously resisted to

agree to a separation for the which there is not the remotest cause, and the which seems to Us a most painful and ill-advised proceeding. Yet, as a proof of OUR personal regard and undying affection for His Excellency the Count of Gottorp, and to show how honestly ready and purposed WE are to further his happiness, no matter at what sacrifice to OURSELVES, WE declare, by these presents, that WE will no longer oppose that his will and irreversible desire, and will solemnly agree to the Deed of Separation between Us, dictated by him at Basle on the twenty-fourth day of January, 1812, signed and sealed by himself, Count Gottorp, in the presence of Herr Schmidt, Solicitor, and duly witnessed by the President of the Swiss Federation and the Postmaster-General, Gemusens, and which was delivered into OUR hand on the twenty-eighth day of January, 1812, by Mr. Spittler of the Swiss Army, on the sole condition that the Count of Gottorp will please to give to the Person sent to Basle with this document by Us, a legal undertaking, signed and sealed with his own hand, and in the presence of responsible witnesses, that he will leave the bringing-up of OUR Children entirely in OUR hands, and make no open attempt, nor use any secret means to detach them from OUR custody, now, or at any future time.

“Written and duplicated at Karlsruhe, in the Province of Baden, this twelfth day of February, 1812.”

It was bitterly cold by the open window, and as the King's fingers were quite numbed with the cold, it took him a considerable time before he could succeed in refolding the papers. He was immensely pleased with what he had read, and returned to the next room, where the Queen's emissary was waiting.

“I will give you the undertaking Her Majesty requires, Baron Berckheim,” he said pompously.

Then, on February 17th, the Act of Separation was formally read and made public in the Hall of the Swiss Federation at Basle, before the President, Solicitors, Registrar, and other municipal functionaries and witnesses.

The huge hall Gustaf Adolf had to cross on his way to the official green table, round which a half dozen of the most important men were seated, was desolate and empty, and

each step he took distinctly audible. It struck him that he had never before heard his own footsteps so plainly; there was something weird and strange in the exaggerated echo; he stepped out very gingerly and slowly, so that he might not hear it so much, and as that had no effect, he walked as fast as he could, so as to get to the end the sooner.

The Assembly rose and bowed as he entered and took the chair reserved for him; only Baron von Berckheim remained standing, and began his speech at once.

"I have been deputed by Her Majesty Queen Frederica Dorothea Wilhelmina, to deliver into the hands of His Excellency the Count of Gottorp a deed in which she pronounces her consent to a Writ of Judicial Separation, sent to her by His Excellency on the twenty-fourth day of January, 1812."

Then, in a loud voice, he solemnly read out the deed which Gustaf Adolf had just perused with so much satisfaction. The echo of its concluding words had hardly died away, when the Count of Gottorp rose, and said, with simple dignity: "As it is already some time that I no longer receive any subsidies from Sweden, having for various reasons thought it best to voluntarily refuse acceptance of the same, I cannot undertake to look after the welfare and education of my children; therefore I have no objection to make to the request of the Queen . . . but," and here he raised his voice that all might hear, "only on condition that they shall be brought up in the Faith into which they were baptized . . . that they shall receive an education according to their rank, and that they shall duly be instructed in those duties which, in their position, they may be called upon to exercise one day."

There he stopped, casting a searching glance at von Berckheim, who, with a deep bow, replied:

"These conditions shall be most honourably carried out."

And this was how Gustaf Adolf freed himself from his wife and children.

CHAPTER XXXVII

AT HERRENHUT

THE Heads of the Moravian Brotherhood were both perplexed and annoyed that they should have chanced to be so much mixed up with the family affairs of the dethroned King of Sweden.

The Lady Superior of the Home for "Single Sisters" at Herrenhut (the Countess Charlotte Sophia of Einsiedel) had received a communication from Vienna, where Gustaf Adolf was apparently spending a few days, to say that he intended coming to Herrenhut almost immediately, and desired her and Bishop Conow to look out a suitable bride (!) for him. Some of the Countess's smart relations had given her that information also, adding that the King had arrived quite unexpectedly in Vienna, there had gone straightway to the Danish Embassy, and requested the Ambassador, Count Levetzau, to provide him with board and lodging, telling him that he was nearly related to his Sovereign, King Frederick. Count Levetzau had tried his best to rid himself of his unwelcome and uninvited guest, by putting before him the insufficiency of accommodation at the Embassy, and the extreme simplicity, not to say poverty, of the furniture. . . . But these representations had in no wise abashed our hero; he immediately chose one of the rooms, and comfortably installed himself in it, bag and baggage. This was what the Countess's relations, who, from their position at the Austrian Court, ought certainly to have been well-informed, had written. From another source, though at precisely the same time, she heard that the "Count of Gottorp" had shabby "rooms," and his meals sent in from a poor, second-rate inn; that he kept but one "man," and that

a lad of barely sixteen, a Dane by birth ; also that the day after his arrival Count Levetzau had taken him for a drive on the Prater in an open carriage, where his unusually large three-cornered hat had attracted a vast amount of attention, as every man in Vienna, from the Archdukes downward, wore nothing but round hats now.

Both correspondents, however, agreed in saying that everybody was very much excited about the King of Sweden, and that his presence formed the chief topic of conversation in the Austrian capital. He had spoken very openly to Count Levetzau about his private affairs, it seems, and it was said that the "Count of Gottorp" had told that gentleman, in strict confidence, that he had twice been on the point of contracting another marriage in Switzerland, but that it had been broken off both times. He (Count Levetzau) had also been given to understand that matrimony had been the object of his writing to announce his speedy arrival at Herrenhut, as he felt sure it would greatly interest the Countess Einsiedel to know what he was contemplating, and that he expected her and the Brethren to choose a suitable wife for him. He was also supposed to have said that if he did not succeed in this third attempt he would go to Jerusalem as a Moravian Missionary ! Yet another correspondent, referring to the same subject, reported that the Count had said : " I will have just one more try, for as I am going to quite another part of the world it would be a comfort to me to feel I had a friend of the opposite sex, who, in conjunction with other qualities, would possess those attributes which only true Christian faith can give."

When the Lady Superior of the Home read these letters, she knew what she might have to expect, and some time before the Count could arrive she, Bishop Cunow, and the Elders of the Settlement had put their heads together to consider what answer they should give to the Royal would-be wooer. They agreed that they should one and all courteously but firmly refuse to be in any way mixed up in such a very delicate undertaking.

But, behold ! Gustaf Adolf had arrived in person, and was

even then sitting in the Countess Einsiedel's own sanctum in the "Sisters' " Home, begging her in earnest, beseeching tones to find him a helpmeet !

" I have no friends or acquaintances, and know not what to do," he said, and it cost the good lady quite an effort to give him the answer she was forced to give him, viz. "*Quite impossible.*" He would pay no attention to her repeated asseverations that she knew of no "Sister" who would suit him. . . . No . . . he came day after day, and made her quite miserable with the depressed looks and despairing accents with which he continued to proffer his petition, which she as often, though in varied phrases, had to deny.

She could not help her mind constantly dwelling on the affairs of this stranger, not only when, in the evening hours of a late, beauteous autumn or second summer, he sat by her open window, pushing away the flower-pots which impeded his view across the country, or when, silent and thoughtful, he tramped up and down in her room, sometimes stopping in front of her spinning-wheel examining the spools, and telling her she must spin a "lucky thread" for him. His presence haunted her hours of sleep ; she thought of him, and how he had looked when he had besought her, at least, to tell him of some place or some people where he could turn in pursuit of his object. His death-like pallor when she had said that it was *impossible* for *her* to help him in any way, and had advised his applying to Professor Jung-Stilling, who had such a large circle of acquaintances of all denominations, and *might* be able to further his plans. She wondered and pondered why this last piece of advice should have put him into such a state that he had left her immediately to go in search of Bishop Cunow, with whom he occasionally took long walks, when he would talk of nothing but his matrimonial affairs, and the Countess well knew that the Bishop's replies would be precisely the same as her own.

However, she trusted that everything would end happily ere long, for during those constitutionals with the Bishop, Gustaf Adolf had frequently said that if no bride could be found for him, he must, at least, be received into the Brotherhood . . . , religious edification being, after all, what he craved

for most. Many a time the good Bishop had had to explain to him that in *his* position *that* would be an utter impossibility, but if as a *friend* and sympathiser he would care to join their religious services and meetings, it would be better for him to settle in some small town, such as Neuwied, for instance, where there was a branch of the Brotherhood. Bishop Cunow meant very kindly when he suggested Neuwied as a suitable place of residence of the Count of Gottorp; he offered to recommend him most warmly to the Brethren there, that they might allow him to join in their religious exercises.

This plan had seemed rather to appeal to Gustaf Adolf; but he insisted upon trying every possible means for finding a Moravian bride *first*, and was anxiously awaiting an answer from the assembly as to whether they would assist him in the search or no.

When their written communication *did* at last reach him, it proved more disheartening and disappointing than he expected, notwithstanding his talks with the Bishop and his frequent and lengthy conferences with the Countess Einsiedel. He had all along been so fully convinced that the Almighty approved his desire, and that all difficulties would be finally removed, in answer to his constant and earnest prayers; now the Assembly's plain and unvarnished reply to the effect that they were totally powerless to render him any assistance whatever, had rudely dashed his hopes to the ground. Their letter went on to say that the Assembly refrained from pronouncing any judgment upon the proceedings of the Count of Gottorp, and though they quite understood that he had obtained the legal separation he had desired, they must decline to advocate a second marriage, as it was entirely incompatible with the views he had himself expressed, and altogether repugnant to their own principles.

It was not so much the refusal which put Gustaf Adolf into a white heat . . . it was the tone in which it was couched. It seemed to imply a rebuke, and therefore his anger was great. Without hesitation or loss of time he sought out Bishop Cunow in his own dwelling. He would not take the chair the Bishop offered him, but paced up and down the room like a caged lion.

and without saying anything. The good Bishop sat by, with folded hands, wondering how soon and in what form the storm would burst forth. The suspense did not last long.

The Count suddenly stopped right in front of the old man, and gave vent to his wrath by overwhelming that venerable dignitary with sharp and bitter reproaches.

So furious was he, and so fast and incoherent his speech, that the Bishop failed to understand him at first—and all the while he was thus raving he kept moving first on one foot, then the other, always on the same spot, as he had done during his captivity at Gripsholm. When this aggravating fidgeting had in some degree soothed his nerves, he said, more deliberately, though still with much bitterness and resentment in his tone : “ I must confess that I find that people who have the means at hand to succour those who are in trouble, seem to think it is best to leave them in their trouble ! ”

“ But Your Excellency does not happen to be in such trouble as you think,” rejoined the Bishop soothingly.

“ But I am—I AM—” he almost shrieked ; “ it is absolutely necessary that I should take a wife to prevent my going to the bad or losing my reason.”

He would have said more, but he was so overwrought, that his tongue could frame no words ; he gasped for breath, but had no voice to say anything. . . . Then he took up his hat and precipitately left the room.

“ It is quite impossible to do anything for him,” murmured the Bishop sadly, and he went slowly to close the door which the Count had left wide open. Then he returned to his comfortable big arm-chair, folded his hands, and uttered a fervent prayer that it might please God speedily to remove this disturber of the peace from Herrenhut, and that the Brethren might be left unmolested.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOMELESS—FRIENDLESS !

GUSTAF ADOLF wished neither to go to the bad nor to lose his reason, so he continued his search for a wife. The consummation of his wish at one time seemed so imminent that he had written to inform his mother that now, at last, he had great hopes of being able soon to contract a fresh marriage ; further, that the King of Denmark had kindly given his consent for the visit to the East, which had been the object of his most ardent desires from his earliest youth, though he had hitherto never seen the slightest chance of carrying the same into effect. He intended first to go to Frankfort, Leipzig, and Vienna, to settle his monetary affairs, in the hope of being able to start on his long expedition this coming spring of 1813.

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But during the short journey to Saxony many things happened to alter and disorganise his plans. First of all, the young person who had been disposed to commit her future into the hands of the Count of Gottorp thought better of it and . . . threw him over ! He, naturally, very much resented this, but his head was so full of his journey to Jerusalem, that his sorrow was not nearly so great as might have been expected ; the projected journey had robbed it of its sting, and his thoughts were altogether so far away just then, that he took but little heed of what was going on immediately around him.

Presently, however, he had a shock which roused him pretty roughly. The King of Prussia had entered into an alliance offensive and defensive with the Emperor of Russia !

With fast-beating heart, Gustaf Adolf read the King of Prussia's appeal to his people to rise and shake off the yoke of French tyranny . . . and though his greatest ambition and desire was to set out upon this expedition to Jerusalem, he felt an almost irresistible impulse to offer his help in the contest against *him* who, during all the years of his reign in Sweden, had figured in his imagination as the "BEAST of the bottomless Pit." Would not this struggle be for "God and the Right" ? He marvelled why he, as King, had not been counted worthy to lead an armed force against the man whose soldiers had suffered such stupendous losses, that the whole world now indulged in hopes of his speedy annihilation.

But, if Providence had denied him the privilege of going forth to battle against the Corsican at the head of his troops, he must e'en bend to the will of the Almighty, and be content to fill a more humble place ; therefore he applied to General Blücher for permission to serve as a volunteer in *his* division, and presented himself personally to that famous commander at Altenburg ; but his offer was declined, and the letter he subsequently wrote on the subject to the King of Prussia never reached that monarch.

It could hardly be expected that a man who had risked land and money in that cause, and who had lost both, should be able to sit still and look on whilst all the world was in turmoil and commotion around him ; this man who belonged nowhere, and with whom no one wished to have anything to do, who rushed aimlessly about, cropping up unexpectedly sometimes in one city, sometimes in another ; nor could he, hoping every moment to be called upon to take an active part in the fray, be expected to tear himself away from the great and immediate centre of action. He no longer possessed the calm, concentrated spirit a man should have who contemplates a pilgrimage to the Holy City, and he thought he must put it off for the present, at least, until he knew what part he might have to play and what would be the issue of the war.

In expectation of some fitting opportunity to renew his offer of service, he wrote to the King of Denmark, asking permission to remain in Holstein, on certain conditions proposed by

himself; he was going to await the answer to this letter at Cassel. He arrived at the latter place the last day of June and put up at an inn, but the next day he moved to the house of the Danish minister, Baron Selby, who had called to pay his respects and offer him hospitality.

Selby was by no means sanguine as to Gustaf Adolf's request with regard to taking up his temporary residence in Holstein being granted, and the honest expression of his opinion greatly depressed the King.

"How very difficult I shall find it," he said, "to obtain a *pied-à-terre* in another country if I am not allowed to settle in the land whence my ancestors came and the Sovereign of which happens to be of the same line, and a near relative of mine, which ought to give me *some* claim at least."

The deposed King of Sweden, who now styled himself "Prince of Holstein," was an object of the deepest interest to the worthy denizens of Cassel, who stared at him to their hearts' content whenever he showed himself in the little town or its environs, though there was nothing at all conspicuous in his appearance. His usual costume consisted of a black frock-coat buttoned up to the throat, dark blue trousers and riding-boots with spurs; the little white Maltese Cross was always *en évidence*, whether he were in plain clothes or in the red Maltese uniform on festive occasions. He frequented the theatre, but refused private invitations, with the exception of one *soirée*, given in honour of the Austrian Ambassador, whose acquaintance he had made some years before. He had no objection to Baron and Baroness Selby receiving their friends at their house; on the contrary, he rather seemed to enjoy these little tea-parties, when he conversed affably and unaffectedly with their guests, and told them all sorts of stories and anecdotes with considerable humour. On these occasions he also sometimes played chess with one or another of the diplomatists present, and was fond of relating that the only relaxation his great ancestor Charles XII allowed himself was a game of chess now and then, but that he always made a mistake between the king and the queen, and checkmated the wrong one, and that he used to say it was a great mistake

that the king should play an inferior rôle to the queen on the board.

King Jerome also took a great interest in the King of Sweden, and soon after Gustaf Adolf's arrival, Counts Siméon and Fürstenstein were sent to pay their Sovereign's respects to him. Fürstenstein also brought a message of sympathy and an offer of financial assistance from his King to the exiled monarch, which the latter decidedly, but with grateful emotion, declined. When talking about Gustaf Adolf with the Baroness Selby one day, King Jerome said he could not understand why he should resent being addressed as "Your Majesty," that being a title which could never legally be set aside.

Sometimes, when alone with his host and hostess, the "Prince of Holstein" would talk about Sweden, and the causes which had led to his being dethroned, but he never said a word about his uncle, Charles XIII, which might lead them to suspect that he had a grudge against him. The first time he spoke with any bitterness about his former subjects was when Baron Selby remarked that it was probably out of consideration for the Swedes that King Frederick had felt obliged to withhold his consent for his residence in Holstein, that principality being in such close proximity to Sweden; to which Gustaf Adolf had replied that he thought it precious hard that the Swedish people should prevent his finding a home and the rest and calm for which he longed, and so only add to his nervousness and depression. If they thought he wanted to be their ruler again they were egregiously in error, as he looked upon them with far too much contempt and distrust ever to desire *that*; he added, with some acerbity, that it was a well-known fact that he corresponded with no one in that country, his mother and uncle only excepted, and that he strove to avoid even a chance meeting with any Swede. On the whole, he was rather pleased than otherwise with the policy now pursued by its King, as it justified and corroborated the measures he had himself adopted when occupying the throne, and which had, nevertheless, been made the pretext for his deposition and expulsion! He also remarked that, having had ample opportunity for studying the character of the nation, he had long ago come to the conclusion

that an absolute monarchy was distasteful to them, and that they would rather have a republic or an oligarchy.

Without any remark of Selby's having led up to it, Gustaf Adolf told him, one day, that at one time before the war of 1808 he had been very anxious to acquire Norway, the possession of which he considered would have been more profitable and advantageous to Sweden than that of Finland, as he had very clearly foreseen that Russia would annex that province in the not far distant future.

In connection with Russia, he rather liked calling up reminiscences of the Emperor Paul, but was very reticent about the Emperor Alexander, who, in his opinion, had been an ungrateful and undutiful son.

As in spite of many letters and urgent appeals the King of Denmark made no advances towards the offer of a residence in his dominions to Gustaf Adolf, he promptly left Cassel and went to Frankfort.

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In a cheerless room in that city sat Gustaf Adolf weeping and moaning enough to melt a heart of stone; wringing his hands in an agony of mind most pitiable to witness . . . but there was no one to pity, to see his despair or to hear his groans; he had retired to an inner room of the suite he occupied, and had locked the door after the visitor who had but now departed. That visitor had been his son, Gustaf, who had come from Bruchsal to see him; it had been a short visit only.

They had been alone together on this their first meeting after the "Separation." The Prince's tutor, Herr Rink, who had brought him, had, by the King's desire, remained in an outer room.

Prince Gustaf had grown, but not very much, and was rather short for his age; he was a handsome lad of fourteen now, with fair, wavy hair, and the mourning he wore for his grandmother (the Dowager Queen Sophia Magdalena) suited him remarkably well. At first he had been very shy; in fact, both he and his father had felt a certain constraint, and after the preliminary conventional greeting had sat silent for a while, Prince Gustaf

keeping his eyes glued to the floor. His father was thinking of the days when his boy had first begun to talk!

At last the Prince said in a very low voice: "My sisters desired me to give you their most respectful greetings, father."

"How very well you still speak Swedish," exclaimed the King.

"Yes, because *mo . . .* I mean, we always have to talk Swedish, so that we may not quite forget it."

"That is right—quite right; it is such a beautiful language. I like talking Swedish, but I have so few opportunities now, as I studiously avoid coming into contact with any Swedes for fear I might get them into trouble or difficulties."

He affectionately patted the boy on the head, and then was silent for a while. Presently he said: "Just think, I never knew of my mother's death until I saw it in the German papers; but I must tell you, my boy, that the present Crown-Prince of Sweden behaved very well to her. I asked my mother, and she wrote and told me that both he and his predecessor had called upon her immediately after their arrival in Stockholm, and had shown her all possible deference and attention. Of course, that was only their duty . . . but I shall not forget it. Since then I have not so much minded calling him by the title which once was yours. They are strange times, indeed, in which we live! Now the French Marshal, as Crown-Prince of Sweden, is fighting with the allied sovereigns against Napoleon Buonaparte, whilst I, who was the first in the breach to defend and stand up for the right, remaining faithful and staunch throughout, now have only to play the part of an idle onlooker, though living in the very midst of the turmoil. Ah, well—it is no use regretting, and I will not think about it now; let us talk of something else."

He had risen from his chair and begun to walk up and down, but ere long he stopped, took a seat by his son's side, and said in quite a different tone: "Now tell me about your sisters, Gustaf."

Now, at last, they had found a subject on which they could meet! Prince Gustaf was still rather shy and afraid of saying too much; but his tongue was loosened when he perceived

that his father's eyes were no longer so searchingly fixed upon him, and he said : " Herr Rink is giving them some lessons, and they have a governess besides ; her name is Mademoiselle Duvoisin."

The King nodded. " Tell me something more," he said.

" I and Sophia have just begun to learn drawing ; we have drawing lessons twice a week—Mondays and Fridays—and we like them awfully."

It seemed to the King that Prince Gustaf talked in a more childish way than he used to do, but he put it down partly to the language, partly to the boy's evident nervousness with him ; so he nodded and smiled kindly by way of encouragement.

" Yes ; both Sophia and I like drawing, but we don't care about our dancing lessons, either of us. Our dancing-master comes three times a week, and Amelia and Cecilia are learning too."

" And how is Amelia's back ? " inquired the King.

" Oh, just the same as it was in Sweden," replied the boy gently ; " she is often ill and ailing, and is not allowed to do as much as the others."

Again the King bent his head. " Go on," he said.

" Sophia plays the piano ; she has been learning music the last three years. At first she did not like it at all, but now she does. Amelia only began music last year."

" And now tell me how you are getting on in the house at Karlsruhe—I mean you and your sisters."

Prince Gustaf was thoughtful for a few minutes, so that he might not be betrayed into saying anything his father would perhaps not like to hear.

" Am I only to tell you how my sisters and I are getting on ? " he said at last. " We have not moved yet into the new house which mo . . . which we bought ; we are still in the old, hired one. The new one is not quite ready for us yet, but when we leave Bruchsal we shall go in every day to arrange things, and we have quite made up our minds how we mean to have it."

" Well, tell me."

" My rooms are going to be on the ground floor, and the girls and their governess will have theirs over mine ; then we

have got a garden and a summer-house where we can have our meals when it is fine. The summer-house is built on to the coach-house, but that doesn't matter. We have had creepers planted to hide the ugly walls ; then there is an arbour covered with roses where we can have afternoon tea. And do you know, father, at Christmas I had a present of a little sleigh that I can go about on in our new garden. My sisters are going to have one part of the garden entirely to themselves, and mother has had a swing put up for them. Then there is an enormous walnut tree with a seat all round ; there are also lots of fruit trees—apples, pears, and plums, and any amount of nice berries to eat and heaps of flowers.”

The King stroked the narrator's head. “ Oh, so you are to have meals in the summer-house and tea in the rose-bower when it is fine ? ” he repeated, with a deep sigh. “ Well, and how are Dubois and his wife ? ”

“ Very well, thank you ; they sent their respectful duty ” (lit : they begged me to lay them at my gracious father's feet !) “ Dubois is not my valet, as he used to be in Sweden, any longer ; he is a sort of secretary to mo . . . I mean, he is our house steward.”

“ Ah, yes, I know,” answered the King. “ And are the birds we brought from Sweden still alive ? Was not the parrot's name ‘ Jakko ’ ? ”

“ Yes, it was ; he and the cockatoo are both still alive ; but Jakko does just as he used to in Sweden, father ; he pulls out all his feathers except a few on the top of his head and in his tail—but he is quite as clever as he was, and talks French so . . . so . . . I don't quite know what you would call it . . . I mean, what he says always seems to come in so pat that he is much jollier to talk to than a great many people.”

“ He is certainly a wonderful creature,” assented the King.

“ Then we also have a black retriever ; but as you don't know him, you won't care to hear about him.”

“ No . . . I have not seen him . . . but did you not say you had had a little sleigh given you at Christmas. What sort of Christmases do you have ? ” asked the King, taking his son's hand and pressing it fiercely between his own icy ones.

The boy shivered, and was again seized with a sudden fit of shyness ; so a few minutes passed before he answered : " Oh, we always keep Christmas in Swedish fashion. We make the big presents into nice parcels sealed up ; the small ones we make up into all sorts of funny ' surprise ' packets, and the tiniest we roll up in lots and lots of paper till they look quite big, and then we put them all (with the names on) into a huge basket, and they are given out in mo . . . in the red drawing-room. We have an awfully jolly time at Christmas, I can tell you."

" Do you ever think of your father ? "

" Of course we do, especially on his birthday, which is on the first of November."

" I don't want to hear about that," interrupted the King, and began to ask about the little Princess Cecilia, whether she could still sing as nicely as she had done in Sweden, and what new songs she had learnt.

Prince Gustaf stayed the night at the hotel, and towards midnight, when all was still and silent, the King stole softly on tiptoe through Herr Rink's room to that where his son lay sleeping. There he sat down by the bed and gazed long and earnestly at the boy who was to leave next day.

As the clock struck eleven and the carriage came up, the King rose from his chair and said : " The time has come, Gustaf ; I will not detain you—we ought not to keep the coachman waiting. Remember me very kindly to Count Lucheri, and tell him that I often think of him, and hope to meet him again some day and have a nice talk with him as I used to do at Bruchsal, and long ago at Karlsruhe."

Prince Gustaf bowed and said : " I will not forget to tell him. Again his small hand was clasped in his father's icy ones."

" And thank your sisters for their message. I want to tell you, too, that I am going to give the legacy left me by my mother to you and to them. Ah, I nearly forgot, amongst my things there is a sword I want you to send me by the next coach, and a small picture of an engagement at sea between the Swedish and Russian fleets on July 7, 1808. Now go, my boy, and God bless you, and though I am not privileged to be near

you, mind you never forget the duty you owe to your father. Go now—go!” and with that he gave his son another hasty embrace, and then almost roughly pushed him out of the room.

Now young Gustaf was gone—gone! and in an agony of grief his father had closed the door once more on his life of loneliness.

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The exiled King of Sweden, now calling himself “Duke of Holstein-Eutin,” had taken up his quarters at Frankfort in an hotel, the worthy landlord of which with all his heart wished him farther just now, for unfortunately the rooms he had chosen formed part of the best suite in the hotel, and this suite was now greatly in request for the accommodation of certain persons of high rank who were to be domiciled for a time in that city. A huge contingent of massed troops were on their way to the Rhine to cross over into French territory, and the Allied Sovereigns with the several Princes and nobles were to watch events from Frankfort. There was a considerable lack of suitable accommodation for visitors of such rank in the city, and everyone was eager to offer a lodging to them, princely personages being especially desired by the hotel and innkeepers as being the most likely to pay, whatever charges were made, with the greatest liberality and without demur; hence the competition was of the keenest. Now it could not be denied that the King of Sweden gave but little trouble and paid punctually and conscientiously every farthing he owed, and under ordinary circumstances his landlord would have been exceedingly sorry to lose him, but during these coming days which promised showers of golden ducats, he *did* wish that his economical lodger, who lived so frugally and only spent what was absolutely necessary and unavoidable, would take himself off and make room for the Grand Duke Constantine, brother of the Emperor Alexander, of whom so much was to be expected; for it was he on whose behalf apartments in that particular hostelry had been demanded. The landlord had been flattered and delighted, of course; but his delight would have been even greater if the Russian emissary had not just insisted on requisitioning the very rooms occupied by Gustaf Adolf. Great

discussions had been held on the subject, and the landlord himself had naturally no objections to make . . . but it was a delicate matter on which to approach the "Duke of Holstein-Eutin."

He ventured to make an attempt at last, though. Very diffidently he knocked at the King's door and waited for the stereotyped "Come in." Even then his mind wavered. The Grand Duke Constantine's roubles were certainly very tempting and attractive, and he both feared and respected the pompous Russian emissary, but in a slightly lesser degree than he did that other exalted personage before whose door he was at that moment shaking in his shoes; his mind misgave him very considerably when he thought of how his request to the Emperor's *brother-in-law* to make room for the Emperor's *brother* was likely to be received. He tried to comfort himself with the reflection that the King of Sweden himself might think it wiser to absent himself before his former Allies with their brothers, cousins, and other kith and kin arrived. So he summoned up all his courage and went in.

"Good morning, landlord," said the King, who was standing writing at his high desk, but had laid down his pen when he saw who the intruder was. "Come in . . . anything the matter, or have you come for your money? I paid my last month's account to your wife yesterday."

"Oh, Your Highness, *that* is all right; I only wished to inform Your Highness that this suite of apartments has been bespoken for the Grand Duke Constantine, and I thought that possibly, under existing circumstances, Your Highness might not wish to have him for such a near neighbour, and that if Your Highness intended going away for a few days . . . I . . . I thought . . ."

"No, my friend, certainly *not*. The Grand Duke's presence in the house will not disturb me in the least. I shall have *my* rooms, and he will have *his*; and if we *should* happen to run up against each other on the stairs or in the passage, it would not be our first meeting, and we should have manners enough to greet one another courteously, exchange a few commonplace remarks, and then each go our own way."

"I . . . I thought that . . . perhaps . . ."

"Well, *don't* think, my good man."

Then Gustaf Adolf took his pen and resumed his writing, thus clearly indicating that he considered the interview at an end. But as it had not terminated according to the landlord's wishes, the latter remained standing where he was.

After a while the King turned round and asked rather irritably: "Was there anything more you wished to say to me, landlord?"

"I . . . I . . ."

"Speak out—I am busy, as you see."

"I suppose that whilst the Grand Duke is here Your Highness wouldn't . . . wouldn't. . . ."

Gustaf Adolf frowned and fixed his eyes so searchingly upon the speaker that he was terrified, and the words he meant to say stuck in his throat.

"Now what is it you really want?" said the King in a tone of great annoyance. "Speak out, man."

"Would Your Highness graciously allow me to have the three rooms now occupied by Your Highness, and which form part of the State suite, for a few days? they join those of the Grand Duke."

"And for what purpose do you wish me to place my rooms at your disposal?" asked the King, a little more gently, which inspired the landlord with a trifle more courage.

"For the use of the Grand Duke, Your Highness," he said. "The Russian courier said he would require them."

Gustaf Adolf grew purple with anger, but restrained himself, and only said sharply and with a touch of irony in his tone: "How *dare* you stand there and ask me to give up the rooms I have engaged and paid for, for the Grand Duke . . . or any other man, for that matter? Do you understand me?"

The landlord *did* understand, and there was nothing left him but to beat a precipitate retreat. From the servants he had heard that this high-bred gentleman always had a loaded revolver within reach in the house, and in his pocket when he took his walks abroad.

The Russian courier was in a towering rage when the landlord recounted his interview, and insisted upon his having another, and that without delay, with his obstreperous lodger, to tell him that there was no alternative, and that he *must* vacate his rooms. The town had offered those apartments to His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke, and he must have them *coûte que coûte*."

"Go in and tell him he *must* turn out, and if he won't of his own free will, I shall call in the help of the police."

"But he is a man of the greatest integrity, and no thief, and he is your Emperor's brother-in-law, moreover, and has been King himself."

"The Grand Duke is my Sovereign's *own* brother, and the other must give way to him."

So once more the landlord stood in the King's apartment waiting to be addressed. But Gustaf Adolf did not so much as turn his head, but went on with his writing as if no one were present. From the street came sounds of the rattling of vehicles and the tramping of horses. There was not a moment to lose . . . kings and princes were rapidly coming nearer.

At length Gustaf Adolf *did* turn; he threw down his pen and said angrily: "Look here, landlord, you disturb me, and I wish to be alone."

"Your Highness, I have been compelled to come again to inform Your Highness that these rooms will *have* to be given up for a few days. I am exceedingly sorry to intrude—but I had no choice."

"*Will* they? I should like to know who sent you here to tell me that?"

"It was the Russian courier, Your Highness."

"I take no orders from a Russian courier—nor anyone else; these rooms are mine by right, and here I stay. You may go and tell him so."

"If you do not consent willingly, Your Highness, he threatens to call in the police and to use violent measures."

"Let him; it would not be the first time that violence had been used towards me. But now go—I tell you"; and he put

out a hand to take up *something* that lay within reach. Before he could turn round the landlord had fled, scared out of his wits. Then the King resumed his work ; his cheeks had regained some colour, his eyes had lost their weary, vacant look, and blazed ; at last, something was happening in which he could take an active part. He nodded his head several times in approval of his own thoughts, and murmured : “ Exactly as it was written in Bender.” *

* A book of problematical prophecy.

CHAPTER XXXIX

STILL NO REST

CONVEYANCES came rumbling across the square, and a loud, angry voice made itself heard in the corridor. When the high-pitched tones with their crude Russian accent died away, Gustaf Adolf finished his writing. He strewed sand on the wet ink, locked the paper up in his desk, and then took a look round. The room had three doors; one opened direct on to the stairs, the second (by which the landlord had entered) on to the passage, and the third led into his bedroom.

Gustaf Adolf resolved to barricade the two first. Exerting all his strength, he dragged the big sofa across the floor. He was obliged to rest a minute in order to get back his breath; then with great trouble he at last got it across the door leading to the stairs. It was a long but very narrow couch upholstered in horsehair. For its present purpose it would have been better had it been rather broader. As it was, whoever forced his way into the room could jump over it with ease. He stopped to think a few minutes, and then he had a brilliant idea; he would pile a few tables and chairs on it, legs uppermost, so as to make the barricade higher and heavier, not so easy to clear or push away. He looked round, but could not discover anything else fit to strengthen his defences; but he filled his washhand basin and stood it and the full water-jug between the legs of the chairs and tables, so that the Russian courier and the police would get a good shower-bath if they forced their way in.

There was nothing more to be done for *that* door, so he began to look after door number two. A large oak cupboard stood

close to it, and seemed to have been made on purpose to block it ; but it was so heavy that, try as he would, it would not budge an inch, and he was crimson in the face from his efforts. But he could find nothing else wherewith to barricade that door ; then he bethought him of the piano, and had dragged it nearly half-way across when it suddenly occurred to him that the instrument might be injured, so he shifted it back to its place. In its stead he took the hat-and-coat-stand on which hung a blue overcoat, a pair of light grey trousers, and some coloured clothes—in fact, all the wardrobe he had discarded when going into mourning for his mother. He also carried over his dinner-table to put against it, but as he always took his meals by himself, that was only a small one. He put chairs on it upside down, then a few flowerpots from the window-sill, his boot-jack, travelling bag, inkpot, in fact everything he could lay hands on to make it heavier—nothing in itself weighty enough to offer the least resistance to anyone's getting in if they wished, still they would, when knocked over, make a good deal of noise and bother the intruder. Well, anybody might come that liked ! Gustaf Adolf could afford to wait ; so with hands clasped behind him he marched up and down the large room, which might have reminded one of some of the pictures of the destruction of Jerusalem—but it gave him plenty of space !

When he chanced to pass his “barricades,” he generally strengthened them by the addition of some ridiculous trifle which he had managed to discover in an obscure corner of the room—four or five pairs of riding-boots, spurs, three-cornered hats and gauntleted gloves lay pell-mell on the small table among the flowerpots—in company with his shaving apparatus and a couple of tongs and pokers ! Presently he heard some one try the handle of the door of his bedroom ; that door, which opened immediately on to the corridor, he had completely forgotten, and it was a curious coincidence that, whoever the intruder might be, he should just have pitched upon that one unguarded door ! No . . . there should not be a repetition of the bedroom scene at Stockholm, he would go and face him boldly ; so he seized one of his hats, set it firmly

on his head, and went into his bedroom, where he flung the door wide open, and that so suddenly that it gave the Russian courier and the German constable who accompanied him a fairly smart knock on the nose. When they perceived the slender black figure, which seemed to take their measure from head to foot with a cold, haughty stare, they stepped back involuntarily with a start. Seeing the police, the inn servants had hurried up and huddled together in a group in one corner waiting further developments with some curiosity, whilst the landlord was endeavouring to hide his diminished head behind the Russian's back.

Gustaf Adolf pretended to see nothing of all this. He left his room, carefully double-locking the door after him, and went leisurely a little way along the passage as if he were starting for an ordinary walk. The constable had been so scared by his sudden appearance, his looks and demeanour, that he could not make up his mind to tackle him. Only when the Russian gave him an impatient sign did he manage to pull himself together to intercept the King on his walk. He cried with a loud voice : "Your Highness ! I presume it is Your Highness' intention to conform to circumstances and to vacate these rooms as long as the Grand Duke Constantine remains at Frankfort and requires them ? "

Gustaf Adolf slightly turned his head, and said in a tone of withering scorn : "I have not the remotest intention of leaving them until it suits my own personal convenience."

As he said this he hastily retraced his steps and set his back against the door through which he had come.

"The magistrates have given me orders to make use of whatever means may be necessary to clear these rooms," said the constable.

"His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia has given his commands that . . ."

"No one gives 'commands' to me," said Gustaf Adolf.

It almost seemed as if the three men were talking at one and the same moment, their words came so fast.

The King remained standing against the door, a pistol lifted high in his hand. He was purple with rage, and

when he called out : " Beware ! one step nearer and I fire," his tone left no manner of doubt but that he meant what he said.

The landlady and women-folk screamed and yelled ; the constable and the Russian fumed and cursed. When the former once more repeated, " By command of the Emperor of Russia," and made as though he would grip Gustaf Adolf by the collar, the latter took aim at him, and a terrible tragedy might have ensued had not another traveller at that moment hurriedly descended the stairs and walked up the corridor. It was a Russian officer who, seeing the man in black in such threatening attitude, stepped up abruptly and cried : " What in the world is going on here ? Surely this must be . . I could not be so mistaken . . ." He made a profound bow to Gustaf Adolf, who gravely acknowledged the greeting and lowered the pistol by a hair's breadth.

" What is the meaning of it all ? " he angrily inquired in the Russian tongue of the courier, who stood humble and cringing before him.

" That gentleman there refuses to vacate the rooms appor- tioned by the city to the Grand Duke Constantine, and His Imperial Majesty gave orders that . . . "

" Didn't you know that that ' gentleman ' was the Emperor's brother-in-law, and until recently King of Sweden ? "

" I *did* hear something of the sort, but . . . His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke was to have the rooms."

" Look sharp and be off, and take the constable with you, and thank your guardian angel and all the saints that I happened to pass in the very nick of time to prevent an outrageous scandal."

Gustaf Adolf kept his post, pistol in hand, ready at a moment's notice to defend his rights to the undisturbed possession of his apartments. He was very pale, and his lips twitched nervously. Standing there on the defensive, ready to shoot down the first who should approach him, he had been thinking how helpless and unprotected he really was against wanton insolence and insult. There was no one in authority to whom he could turn for redress from the offensive impertinence

of his Russian brother-in-law, the friend and ally of the new heir-apparent to the Swedish throne; or from the persecution of the other Allied Sovereigns who were desirous of driving him from this city and any other he might elect to stay in.

Therefore he was quite touched by the Russian officer's respectful recognition of him, and it was not without a great effort to control his feelings that he could bring himself to listen calmly to that gentleman's courteous apologies for the annoyance which, he was sure, the Emperor Alexander would be the first to deplore as soon as he should hear of it.

"Yes, I believe that—he would not do otherwise; but all the same, I am infinitely indebted to you, sir, for your very opportune interference. I would invite you to my rooms if they were not at this moment in such a very unpresentable condition. As I had been threatened with violence if I did not give them up voluntarily, which nothing on earth would induce me to do, I was obliged to barricade the doors."

As he spoke he opened his bedroom door, lifted his hat and bowed to the officer, who gave a military salute and stood at attention until the slim, black-coated figure had disappeared. Once in his own quarters again, Gustaf Adolf broke down completely, his fury and injured pride culminating in a paroxysm of angry tears. He sat on the side of his bed and railed against this last bitter humiliation—the threat of being forcibly ejected from the only place he could, for the time being, call his own, and that, too, by "command" of the Emperor of Russia! Never had he felt so impotent, so crushed. Nor had he expected that the feeling of not being permitted to take part in the stirring doings of the world, of not having any rôle to play in the tragedy of war, of being, as it were, but a speck of dust to be blown about at will by his brother Sovereigns, would hurt him so intensely! None of them would have anything to do with him, and yet *he* had been the first to denounce the French tyranny—his advice was not even asked; he counted only as one who would never be missed, who could unceremoniously be set aside and ignored, not only in public but in private life also, when even the small space he occupied in a house like this was

wantonly required by another. His thoughts flew to the story of David and Uriah—oh, how like Uriah he felt !

The light of the short November day was fast melting into twilight, and it was too dark to see to read any longer. He was hungry, and thought of ordering his dinner. He got up to ring the bell, and just had his hand on the wool-worked bell-pull, when he remembered something—before he could sit down to his meal it was necessary he should have a table ; so he set-to to demolish the barricades, and was just carrying one of the flowerpots back to its place by the window when there was a knock at the door.

“ I cannot open that door ; go to the other,” he cried, as he set down the pot on the piano. The door opened, and a fine soldierly-looking man, in the uniform of a Russian General, entered.

“ I know not whether Your Highness will graciously remember me, but it was I, who by order of the Emperor of Russia, attended Your Highness three years ago at Polangen and at Riga.”

“ Of course, I remember you well,” said the King, “ the Emperor’s Adjutant, Count Ozarowsky. I will light up in one minute.” He struck a light on the flint and lighted two wax tapers which shed a melancholy gloom over the spacious chamber.

Then he turned and glanced covertly at the newcomer, who with a low bow said : “ This time again I come by order of the Emperor. He wishes me to express his most sincere regret at the annoyance caused to Your Highness, entirely without his knowledge or consent, of which, he trusts, Your Highness will be well assured.”

“ I am—I am. No Sovereign would treat another of the Lord’s Anointed, and a near relative besides, in that manner. I felt that his name was being used wrongfully, and I appreciate the courtesy shown in sending you here with his message and apologies. Now I shall with pleasure place my rooms at his disposal and leave Frankfort. Remember me to the Emperor Alexander, and inform him that I shall make all needful preparations and procure a passport without delay, so as to leave

for Switzerland not later than to-morrow. Now take a seat, Count, and let us have a little chat."

The Count looked round the room for a couple of chairs, but failed to find any; they were all piled up on the sofa upside down before the one door, and on the dinner table before the other!

"Help me get down those two arm-chairs," said Gustaf Adolf as he moved the tongs, cans, and other heterogeneous impedimenta so as to be able to get at them. With a break in his voice he added apologetically: "I could not tell to what extent the Emperor Alexander's name might be misused, so, like Charles XII, I was obliged to barricade myself in my own house. I will only put these flowerpots back in their place," and very lovingly he took up a pot of scarlet geranium and carried it to the window. Then he turned to the Emperor's messenger and said: "Is it true that there is going to be a Congress, Count? There, you take that chair; I prefer walking up and down when I am talking."

"I have heard that Congress *is* to meet," replied Count Ozarowsky, watching the King, who paced the room apparently absorbed in deep reflection, as narrowly as the sparse illumination would allow. He wondered what resolution the deposed King was forming in his own mind; that he *was* forming one was evident from the expression of his countenance and the rapid change of colour from ashy pallor to almost purple.

He seemed to have made up his mind at last, for he suddenly came to a dead stop in front of the Count and said: "To-morrow I intend writing a letter to the Emperor Alexander, which I shall ask you to be good enough to deliver to him. I am going to request him to draw up certain paragraphs and suggestions for me for the establishment of an universal, honourable, and lasting peace—I should like to know his views before I leave."

Count Ozarowsky did not answer; he was utterly dumb-founded. Was Gustaf Adolf dreaming? Was this dethroned monarch, who could never compass peace in his own land, under the impression that he was called upon to settle the

peace of Europe? Surely greater powers than *he* possessed were needed for such a stupendous task!

But by all means let him write the letter if it gave him pleasure. . . . Count Ozarowsky knew well what the Emperor's reply, as the friend, cousin, and staunch ally of the Crown-Prince Carl Johaṇ of Sweden, would be.

CHAPTER XL

A CLAIMANT TO A THRONE

GUSTAF ADOLF had spent the last month of the year at Basle, but the beginning of the following year, 1814, again found him at Frankfort.

Very reluctantly he had been obliged to relinquish all hopes of a second marriage, and of the domestic bliss he had longed for, and, besides the excitement and suspense of awaiting the issue of the campaign against Napoleon, he had a good many private and personal worries at this time. After his return to Frankfort, and after what he considered an unconscionably long delay, he had received two letters from Prince Gustaf; in the second the boy told him that he now had a Swiss tutor, a Baron de Polier, a piece of news which had very much vexed the King; he did not conceal his displeasure either, but wrote to his son: "I was much surprised to hear that a tutor had been engaged for you before anything had been said to me; it was not nice of you, nor in accordance with the respect and confidence you owe to your father not to have mentioned it to me before, when it is a matter of such vital importance for your future. Though far away from you, I cannot look with indifference on the choice of a tutor. Debarred from the happiness of seeing you, or being with you, I feel even more concerned at the thought of a stranger having been selected as your instructor. In my last letter I think I told you what kind of a man I considered such an one ought to be; but I perceive my letter came too late, and far be it from me now in any way to wish to set you against the person who has been definitely appointed to be your teacher and guide."

But the more Gustaf Adolf pondered on the fact that the



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new tutor had, so to say, been chosen behind his back, the more hurt and offended he felt. It had never occurred to him that his repudiated spouse could or would take any decisive step with regard to the education of her children, more especially that of the boy, without consulting him ; he could not resign himself to the idea that the affairs of his family could be settled and managed without *his* having any voice in the matter. He was particularly vexed that in making the most important appointment with regard to his son, Queen Frederica's choice should have fallen upon a Swiss, as this would prevent the stipulations of the " Act of Separation " being duly carried out ; for how could anyone be so foolish as to believe that a rabid Calvinist (as, of course, a Swiss was bound to be !) could confirm the Prince in the creed to which he had been born, or that a staunch Radical and Republican could instil into his young mind those exalted ideas of the " prerogative of Kings " so necessary to him, if God, in His unfathomable wisdom, *should* call him to mount the throne at some future day.

These, to him, all-important details he did not dwell upon when writing to his son, though he thought of little else as he scoured the hills around Frankfort, and contemplated the beautiful winter landscape lying at his feet. Considering the latitude of that city, the winter was exceptionally severe that year ; indeed, the cold at Bruchsal had been so intense that one of a number of young, white-robed girls, who had been strewing flowers on the path of the Empress of Russia by way of welcoming her when she visited that place, had caught a violent chill, which had terminated in her untimely death.

Whilst the Emperor Alexander was leading his troops against the French, his Consort, the Empress Elisabeth, her unmarried sister, the Princess Amelia of Baden, who had accompanied her from Russia, Queen Frederica, and all the family, had been welcomed by the Margravine to her pretty residence at Bruchsal ; she also had bidden her other daughters and their husbands (i.e. the King of Bavaria and the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt) make her house their home for a time. Gustaf Adolf knew that his Queen and Prince Gustaf at this period formed part of a large family circle there, for he kept up a regular

came up to the King and asked, very politely, whether he and his comrades might borrow the paper for a few minutes. Gustaf Adolf nodded, and, neatly folding it, gave it to him. This incident had served to rouse him from his reverie, and he rose and hurriedly left the room. In his bedroom he went up to the little canary which hung in a cage by the casement, stuffing some green meat which he had purchased in the market between the bars; and watched the little recipient hop from perch to perch, carefully peering round to see that no envious enemy was near, after which he greedily fell to nibbling the tit-bit.

Gustaf Adolf was not thinking of the bird, however, although his eyes were fixed upon it; his thoughts still ran on his arch-enemy, Napoleon. . . . *He* had had plenty of time to prepare for the catastrophe, and was *he* going to let himself be dethroned, cast out, without voluntarily abdicating in favour of his *son*?

Just then sounds of merry melody reached him from a room not far off, apparently the sweet, fresh voice of a young country-maid. He frowned, went hastily to the door, which he half-opened, and cried: "Stop that noise, will you? You disturb my meditations." The singing ceased immediately, and when he stood again before the birdcage there was deadly quiet all around; only the small, happy bird began to sing and trill his best, whilst Gustaf Adolf sat solemnly, Bible in hand, vainly endeavouring to fathom the unfathomable mysteries and prophecies of the Book of Revelation. At last he closed the sacred volume, shook his head, and murmured: "I can't believe it until I hear that he has really renounced his throne for the sake of his son."

He put the Bible back on its shelf and began pacing up and down as usual, ruminating on the downfall of his foe; his heart beat tempestuously. . . . Now justice had gained the day; the Bourbons would again take possession and assume the sovereignty of which they had been so long and wrongfully deprived. A new era would commence for the world. If, indeed, it were all true, Gustaf Adolf might breathe freely again, and, with the help of God, take his future into his own hands and shape it as he listed. He opened the window and took a deep breath

it was one of the brightest and crispest days in the first week of April, and reminded him of an early summer's day in Sweden.

He sat down and reflected for some time as to what he could do now in order to once more attain a conspicuous place in the world; now that the insurmountable obstacle to his advancement and the abomination of his soul had been removed, for he had for years been under the ineradicable impression that Napoleon had been the one and only impediment in his way, and he was of the same opinion still. The clear, fresh air turned his thoughts towards the north.

Not that he wished ever to return to Sweden. No . . . metaphorically speaking, he had "washed his hands" of that country. For a month past he had had another project in his mind, though he had not been able to take any steps towards its attainment so far. No longer hampered now, and master of his own destiny, he turned his eyes to another throne, to which he considered himself entitled by right of inheritance. The Treaty of Kiel had been signed, and by it the new Crown-Prince of Sweden had been promised that the Kingdom of Norway should be incorporated with his; but the Norwegians had not been minded to have their country bestowed as a present upon Sweden in that casual fashion; they considered they had every right to make their own arrangements. The whilom Danish Governor, Prince Christian Frederick, had undertaken the administration of Norway, and there was every prospect of his being ultimately chosen King. However, nothing had as yet been definitely or irrevocably settled.

At this thought such an effusion of blood rose to Gustaf Adolf's head, and he was so overpowered by heat, that he rushed to the second window and hastily threw it open to get a little more air; his next step was to go to his desk on which lay a large sheet of writing-paper. He looked at it hard before he attempted to write, then his pen spluttered, and he was obliged to make another, and in his agitation he cut his finger.

Ah! that was what he intended to be . . . KING OF NORWAY!

As he was mending his quill, he said to himself: "I am not revengeful, but I should not be half a man if I did not put in a

spoke and save that country from being made a free gift to the Crown-Prince of Sweden, as he has been promised by the Emperor of Russia. When I was King I made several futile attempts to acquire Norway, so I know very well what its annexation means to Sweden."

A tiny thread of red from his wounded finger had run along the feathery part of the quill, and Gustaf Adolf shivered as he beheld it. . . . Was it an omen that what he was meditating would not be accomplished without the shedding of blood? He could not write with a bloodstained pen, so he carefully scraped it, and then, in his bold, clear hand, he began :

"Men of Norway !"

He intended to write in the form of a proclamation. Having got so far he laid down his pen and looked hard at those three words. He had committed so many "proclamations" to paper whilst he was King, and read so many since, that he found no difficulty in composing another. Still, this one must be particularly forcibly and strongly conceived, so as to appeal to the people for whom it was meant. He tried to remember the former ones he had addressed to them, but they would not be suitable in this case; *then* they had only referred to the benefit Norway would reap by becoming an integral part of Sweden, instead of remaining under the thumb of Denmark. *Now* he had to propose that it should form a separate and independent kingdom, and his "proclamation" must be worded accordingly.

He took up his pen and added an extra flourish or two to the words already written . . . but got no farther; so he relapsed into his customary tramp, the better to collect his thoughts.

The canary's lively song interfered with his reflections; he took an Indian silk handkerchief and threw it over the cage to silence him; then he stopped once more in front of his desk and continued writing.

"If you, as the most ancient nation of the Northern hemisphere, will lift up your voice to proclaim to the rest of the peoples your irrevocable and determinate purpose to remain a free and independent nation, I feel that it becomes me, Gustaf Adolf (as the son of the immortal King Gustaf III.)

his Queen, Sofia Magdalena) at one time King of Sweden, Ruler of the Goths and Wends, Heir to the realms of Denmark and Norway, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Ditmarschen and the Marshes, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, etc. etc. . . ." How glibly those titles flowed from his pen! . . . and it was quite a pleasure to see them there, all in a row! he read them out aloud to make sure that none had been omitted! They were all there, and now he would get on swimmingly.

" . . . to do what I can to uphold my claim to the inheritance which is my right by law, that Northern realm ; as a Man *alone*, it is not for me to stir up strife between Ruler and people, nor to expatiate upon the strength and power which peace and unity confer, nor the future advantages which would tend to promote the welfare of that realm."

This he also read in loud, official tones ; he frequently nodded approval of what he had written, and then he walked about for a time to gain further equally happy inspiration.

" I should consider myself unworthy of being a King's son if I were to forget what I owe to myself and to the Norwegian people. At the critical moment when that nation is about to stand up for its lawful independence, there can be no doubt that it will see and acknowledge my claim to its throne. Although Prince Christian Frederick's rights thereto may be as valid as mine, he is a subject of the King of Denmark, having been appointed by him Chief Commander in Norway. *I am not so bound, hence I believe myself to be entitled and worthy to stand as sovereign at the head of a free and independent people, already having the privilege of figuring among the number of the Lord's Anointed, and as such I vow to maintain, with life and limb, the laws and constitution of that people, God helping me. . . . Signed and sealed with Our own Hand and Royal Seal appended ; this fifth day of April in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen.*

" GUSTAF ADOLF."

He took the huge sheet from his desk and held it in his hand ; as he passed the canary's cage he uncovered it and watched the little yellow warbler gratefully hop about, delighted to see the blessed sunshine once more.

Then he took up a position by one of the old arm-chairs, leaning his right elbow upon it, proud and erect as though it were a throne from which he had just risen. In loud, impressive tones he read the "proclamation" to the only listener present, the little canary, who sang the louder the more the reader raised his voice. Never had any audience, surely, received a "proclamation" with more loud and noisy demonstrations of approval than the little feathered listener.

CHAPTER XLI

RESOLUTIONS AND COUNTER-RESOLUTIONS

GUSTAF ADOLF could no longer entertain any doubt of the downfall of Napoleon Buonaparte, for a few days later the papers reported his final abdication in favour of his son, which the French people had refused to accept, as they required his *complete* renunciation of the throne of France, not only for himself, but also on behalf of his son.

But this man, who had been the cause of so much misery and evil in the world, was not doomed to become a destitute, homeless wanderer. The Island of Elba was apportioned to him, where he would still be supreme, and some scores of his Guards accompanied him thither of their own free will. Gustaf Adolf gave up trying to draw a parallel between the fate of Napoleon and his own . . . for there was none, and he groaned as he thought of it. He got hold of the German papers as soon as ever they came out, and read the contents with avidity ; he thought every article must have been written expressly for *him* during these last weeks. The fulfilment of all his hopes and expectations seemed written therein. He read that Louis XVIII had entered Paris in regal state on May 3rd, and his vivid imagination pictured what the thoughts and feelings of a man might have been, after twenty years of exile from his country, when returning as its Sovereign. The day this announcement met his eye he could neither eat nor rest, but spent the time wandering aimlessly about the most deserted streets, and the night pacing up and down his bedroom, meditating on the curious chances and changes of life.

With much less perturbation he read, at the end of the month, that the people of Norway had chosen Prince Christian

Frederick to be their King. He felt no resentment towards them for having offered the Crown to a Prince who was as eligible as himself; it only grieved him sorely that his hopes of at last finding a country he might call his own, and in which he might make a permanent home after all his wanderings and buffeting about, should be dashed to the ground. He had been so sanguine when he wrote his "proclamation." There seemed nothing left to him but to become naturalised, either at Basle or some other city in Switzerland, on his return from the East, where he meant to go as soon as things should be a little more settled in the universe. He was much looking forward to that expedition, but first he must watch over his son's claims to the throne of Sweden at the Congress which was shortly to meet, when the affairs of Europe would be guided by other hands than heretofore.

With all necessary formality he had made over the portion of his mother's inheritance which fell to him to his children, and had solemnly intimated to the Court of Baden, through their plenipotentiary, Count von Berekheim, that so much wrong having been done to Prince Gustaf, he (the King) had decided that that young man should be declared to attain his majority at the age of seventeen, when he was to rejoin his father, and be guided by him with regard to his actions in the future.

This he had done as a sort of protest against the Queen's interference, as she had taken her own way in the matter of her son's bringing-up without consulting him on that important point. Had she not been guilty of a gross lack of consideration for the father, when, with the usual shortsightedness of the weaker sex, she had chosen the Emperor Alexander, a warm partisan of the present Crown-Prince of Sweden, as guardian to his children and hers? Was it not ignoring Providence and courting disappointment in the plans for her son's succession to the throne, which she had seemed to have so much at heart, and for which she had so assiduously worked and schemed.

The object the Congress at Vienna had in view was to settle the present woefully-tangled affairs of Europe on a good and

basis, and Gustaf Adolf entertained fatuous hopes that the whole world would see his own and his son's troubles with *his* eyes ! Therefore he thought it advisable to send in to the members a written statement, in which matters were to be clearly set before them. He began by saying that he had been a victim of the Swedish revolution of 1809, and dwelt with some bitterness on the nonchalance with which the Swedes had sacrificed their legitimate Sovereign to their political interests.

He repeated that in consequence of that revolution he had issued an " Act of *Abdication* " of his own accord, but as that Act had been conceived and signed in prison, he thought it incumbent upon him to recapitulate it in full on this occasion. He strongly insisted that, whatever might be said to the contrary, he had made no *renunciation* either for his son, or in his son's name. He had no right to do so, but trusted that when the Prince came of age he would himself uphold his claim to that throne from which the Swedish nation had so wrongfully and ignominiously driven *him*, in a manner becoming his position.

The English Vice-Admiral, Sir William Sidney Smith, offered to lay this document before Congress in Vienna, and Gustaf Adolf duly forwarded it to that chivalrous and highly esteemed nobleman's address.

He himself continued to work hard to make monarchs and statesmen acknowledge that his son's claims were unassailable, and he purposed to pay a personal visit to Louis XVIII, in Paris, early in the following spring, with the intention of soliciting that Sovereign's friendly intervention on Prince Gustaf's behalf. This idea had struck him the moment he had heard of the restoration of the Bourbons, and he had penned an effusive letter of congratulation to King Louis, and had sent him a gift by which he (Gustaf Adolf) set much store, viz. a double-barrelled gun, which had belonged to the murdered Duke of Enghien, and which the Princess de Rohan had given him (the King) as a memento of that martyr-prince ; he could not have given the French King anything more precious, and he thought it would be equally valued by him.

At this time Gustaf Adolf was staying at Basle, and was

making all sorts of preparations for his journey to Paris and his visit to the French Court. He was very pleased when he heard that King Louis, in a letter to Talleyrand, his representative at Vienna, had said : " I will never shut my door upon anyone who has opened his door to me." Of course, Gustaf Adolf knew that *he* was the one who had " opened his door " to the French exile, and when he heard that King Louis had inquired of the same minister whether it were really a fact that the King of Sweden had been willing to give up the Crown for the sake of his son, Gustaf Adolf felt that the French monarch was neither ungrateful nor forgetful, and indulged in the hope that the Prince's coming-of-age would create a sensation in which he himself would play a prominent part, never to be forgotten and which would shed a halo round his name for ages to come. The Emperor Alexander, though ostensibly the Prince's guardian, naturally held with his Swedish ally (the present Crown-Prince) with whom he was anxious to remain on friendly footing. When Sir William Sidney Smith laid the King's statement before the Emperor, he had replied that he had no wish to hear anything about matters which did not concern him, and when the English Admiral answered that he had undertaken to bring this document to the notice of the assembled monarchs, and desired to leave it in the Emperor's hands, Alexander had rejoined, with more candour than courtesy, that he might do what he liked with it, but that he (the Emperor) declined to accept any such appeals.

Once before, when an Austrian officer had mentioned this " Act of Declaration " to the Emperor, and had expressed his conviction that the fate of Prince Gustaf must evoke much sympathy and commiseration, that autocrat had replied, even more sharply : " However much I may feel for a monarch who has been deprived of his crown, I am quite convinced that the will of the people ought to be respected, and that no outsider has any business to meddle in such matters."

" My imperial brother-in-law is mighty particular in following up these principles when it is to his own advantage," Gustaf Adolf said with much bitterness, when he heard of this last remark of the Emperor's.

Having set the stone rolling on Prince Gustaf's behalf, he thought he must now profit by the short interval of comparative calm to think about that long-postponed expedition to Jerusalem, on which he was to start immediately after his visit to the French Court ; this he deemed a fitting moment for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

His plans were so far formed that they only required setting down and publishing in the papers. He had already sought the Sultan of Constantinople's permission to enter Jerusalem ; it now remained to publish an appeal to a chosen few to take with him.

But the notice he meant to issue could not be properly condensed into the small space allotted to it. If he only *saw* the word "Jerusalem" so many pictures floated before his mental vision that it was impossible to express what he wished to say in a few concise words. Incidents related in the Bible, the actors and sacred persons taking part therein, passed vividly before his mind in that *one* word. It was the same when he substituted the word "Palestine." His thoughts wandered to stories and romances of the Crusades which had been read to him when a boy at Stockholm, and which had fired his imagination as a young man at Haga. He had to blink and rub his eyes to dispel these visions before he could go on. He had read much about the origin and history of the Knights of Saint John of Malta, which interested him deeply as being himself a Knight of that Order. Within the last few years he had had serious thoughts of creating a new "Order," which should have a pilgrimage to the Holy Land for its object, and when coming in contact with wise and learned men during his roving life, he had sought for information about the German Knights and the Knights Templars with a view to accomplishing his object.

But this he thought to dismiss from his mind at present, and apply himself to drawing up an appeal in clear and simple language, which might induce many of a like manner of thinking with himself to accompany him on his venture.

He would not say too much, though ; his heart beat fast, and he had torn up any number of sheets of paper and consigned

them to the flames before he had evolved the invitation to his satisfaction.

It bore date February 6th, 1815, but several days elapsed before room could be found for its insertion in the *Frankfort Gazette*; it was to be copied by other papers and circulated throughout Europe.

When he unfolded the *Gazette* and for the first time saw the appeal in print, he thought he had succeeded too well in condensing it. It seemed to read dry and dull, and to have little that was inspiring or attractive in it. He shook his head and sighed. But that was not the general opinion; others who perused it thought it a most curious and fantastic production, and it aroused a good deal of attention and lively comment. The tenor of it was as follows: "By this notice We would inform all whom it may concern that the Ottoman Government has granted unto Us permission to enter and visit the 'Holy City.' This has been Our most fervent wish and desire from Our earliest days, even when We saw no possibility of gratifying the same. Yet We had a latent presentiment that Providence did intend and mean Us to undertake this Pilgrimage. But inasmuch as We are now contemplating this expedition in the near future, We should take everlasting shame and reproach to Ourselves, did We not make Our purpose to visit the 'Holy City' known throughout Christendom, and invite diverse Brethren in the Faith to join Us. Those who desire to do so can do so under the conditions hereafter set forth, and We ask ten Brethren of European birth to bear Us company, viz.:

- 1 Englishman,
- 1 Dane,
- 1 Spaniard,
- 1 Frenchman,
- 1 Holsteiner,
- 1 Hungarian,
- 1 Dutchman,
- 1 Italian,
- 1 Russian, and
- 1 Swiss.

“(1) Each one to be provided with a written character from his parish minister or magistrate of the place wherein he ordinarily dwells, confirming the purity and singleness of his motive.

“(2) The place appointed for the meeting to be Trieste, and the date for departure fixed for June 24th of this current year.

“(3) Any playing cunningly upon a musical instrument to bring the same with him, provided it be amenable to ordinary transport.

“(4) To meet the necessary expenses and form a common fund, each member to provide himself with four thousand guilders in Augsburg notes, or not less than two thousand guilders in ready money.

“(5) Each ‘Brother’ to be at liberty to bring with him one serving-man, provided the latter be of a truly Christian character, and of seemly behaviour.

“(6) The ‘Brethren’ to be attired in sober and decent black garments, without buckles or any other ornamentation. They are to let their beards grow as a sign of manly courage and resolve, and must look upon it as a great honour to be enrolled and known as ‘Black Brethren.’ Further particulars as to outfit and route will be communicated to them at Trieste.

“(7) Servants’ apparel to be of sober grey or black, as will be more particularly discussed at Trieste.

“(8) The twenty-fourth of June to be the last day for the inscription and admission of ‘Brethren.’ The public will be informed by the papers when the number is complete.

“(9) Those wishing to join must put an announcement of their intention into the local paper and into the Frankfort Gazette, and communicate with Ourselves by letter only, addressed to the Editor of the *German Gazette*, Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

“Given at Basle in the year of Grace, 1815.

(Signed) “GUSTAF ADOLF.”

Concurrently with the publishing of this proclamation a notice from the “Duke of Holstein-Eutin” was given out in all the churches in Basle, to ask Christians there to think of and remember in their prayers the pious brethren dwelling

in the sacred places they (the "Black Brethren") were now about to visit. So for the present there was nothing more to be done but patiently to await the result of these appeals, and to inscribe the names of any likely applicants. It wanted still four months and a half to June 24th, and, considering the unexciting calm which at this period obtained throughout Europe, it did not seem unreasonable to hope that the desired number of Brethren would apply and the number be completed long before the expiration of the time appointed. Now Gustaf Adolf had to think of how to scrape together the money necessary for his own person ; for as the Head of the expedition and "Grand Master" of the "Black Brethren," he must naturally live quite differently to them (!) and would require a great deal more than four thousand Augsburg guilders. After having first given the whole of his private income from Sweden to the Queen and his children, and then having made over to the latter the entire fortune left him by his mother, the parures and jewellery he had kept constituted nearly all he possessed. Much of this he sold or borrowed upon, the rest he meant to take with him to be converted into ready cash later on, if need were. He was quite aware that this projected pilgrimage would swallow up an immense amount of money, but he was willing to undergo any privation, however hard, in time to come if only he might *now* attain his object. Who could tell how long he might still have to live ; perchance his days of wandering and exile might come to a close in the sacred precincts of the "City of Peace," and his body be laid to rest in that holy ground. . . .

Whilst the conclave of monarchs assembled in Vienna were occupied in re-adjusting the map of Europe according to their several fancies, removing one ancient landmark here and another there, to the satisfaction of one party and the annoyance of another ; and whilst Gustaf Adolf was indulging in dreams of Jerusalem, and trying to find a likely man to accompany him to Paris as Adjutant-on-duty, a most unexpected event occurred, which not only almost drove the potentates at the Congress to distraction, but which convulsed nearly all the world as well. It was not an earthquake which

swallowed up great tracts of land as in a twinkling, and it was not a waterspout or a whirlwind strong enough to snap the stoutest forest trees and tear the roof from cot and castle to be flung like a wisp of straw into the air; nor was it a raging fire or flood, dealing death and destruction; nor a volcanic eruption burying towns and villages under masses of burning lava and ashes;—what *did* actually happen was deemed worse than all or any of these.

On March 7th news reached the Austrian capital that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, and a few days later a courier from Sardinia brought papers reporting that the Corsican had landed on the coast of Provence! He had appeared with a handful of soldiers, not more than a thousand at most, and from the accounts published in the German papers it might have been reasonably surmised that his foolhardy attempt might have been easily crushed in its birth and Buonaparte once more relegated to his little island, or perhaps to another rather more inaccessible. But the small contingent of followers with which he landed grew with the rapidity of an avalanche as he made his way through France. No sooner did the troops sent out against the former Emperor of the French behold him again, than they went over to his side, and though the Allied Sovereigns had just been more or less at loggerheads concerning the partition of the State of Saxony, they were entirely unanimous in framing a decree of banishment *ad perpetuum* against Napoleon, the destroyer of the peace of Europe. His removal would certainly be a source of universal satisfaction; his presence, no doubt, threatened new dangers to the world, more terrible to face than any calamity of nature.

On the evening of March 20th Napoleon once more entered Paris, Louis XVIII having sought safety in flight only the day before. As a matter of course, the Allied Sovereigns could not acknowledge the imperial usurper, who gathered round him an army quite capable of crushing both English and Prussians before Austria and Russia could come to their assistance.

This happened during those weeks of calm and peace in which Gustaf Adolf was to have been a guest at the Bourbon Court in Paris, and when he was expecting untold numbers

Canning bent over his papers for a minute ere he replied :
“ I will inform my Sovereign of Your Highness’ request.”

He expected that having said his say, his august interviewer would leave him to go on with his business, which was of far greater importance than the affairs of the King of Sweden. Yet he could not feign perfect indifference whilst he had to wait ; the man before him was so very peculiar and his ideas odd beyond conception.

Whilst proffering his request for the Island of Elba, Gustaf Adolf had risen from his chair. As not unfrequently happened, he forgot that he was the petitioner and not the audience-giver, who could take his time.

It was not until Mr. Canning ventured to discreetly clear his throat and cough that Gustaf Adolf woke from his reverie, and said : “ I would also ask His Britannic Majesty’s Government, through you, to give me leave to join the Duke of Wellington at his head-quarters, to take part in the war against the universal foe who has again so unexpectedly turned up.”

Once more Mr. Canning’s eyes opened wide, and he looked at the speaker with the same puzzled feeling as before. The expression he had made use of, the tone, and whole manner were so excessively pompous and overdone, that it sounded to Canning as if that stiff and starched, pale individual had been craving permission to fight on the side of Cherubim and Seraphim, angels and archangels, against the arch-enemy of mankind !

He found it almost impossible to reply to these eccentric proposals with suitable, well-chosen words, although he *could*, in a certain way, understand what had prompted Gustaf Adolf to make them ; but as the latter was evidently expecting an answer, and did not seem disposed to depart without one, Canning was forced to make some kind of a retort. He did so in the most gentle, conciliatory tone, hoping thereby to take off the keen edge of the disappointment his words were bound to convey.

“ I will at once inform the Court of Great Britain of Your Highness’ proposals, but am much afraid that I can hold out

but slender hope that the answer will be to Your Highness' satisfaction."

"You think, then, that they will refuse to let me have Elba, or to fight with England against Buonaparte?"

"I do, Your Highness."

"Well . . . *I do not*; both requests are reasonable enough, and can be acceded to without prejudice to anyone. No doubt His Britannic Majesty will see that, and act accordingly. Farewell, Mr. Canning, I will not detain you any longer."

It was still his prerogative to take his leave when he chose, without waiting for any hint that an interview was at an end; he availed himself of it on this occasion.

The English Minister accompanied him to the door and courteously bowed him out, but when Mr. Canning returned to his room he shook his head, and said half-aloud: "Eccentric! Mad! Surely there is not his like in the universe for hatching preposterous schemes with which he fritters away his own time and wastes other people's."

CHAPTER XLII

THE PILGRIMAGE OF ULYSSES

GUSTAF ADOLF'S thoughts and dreams about the expedition to Jerusalem were widely different to his ideas and reflections about other things.

His dreams and fancies about the journey to the Holy Land had wings which wafted him far above earthly troubles and vexations, to regions where the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters, where the carnal body is no longer a burdensome shell, and where the soul is troubled by no unrest. Even his joyous anticipations of that journey differed materially from the pleasure he had taken in ordinary travel. It seemed to him as if he were going to travel in the prophet's chariot of fire above the clouds, as if he were to cross the ocean in a marvellously constructed ship which required neither sail nor rowers, but which would glide along the untroubled mirror of the water, steered and guided by invisible hands. He fancied himself sitting on deck, surrounded by saintly men, who thought the same thoughts as he, and, like himself, had thirsted for years to see the place towards which they were being borne amid strains of heavenly music, filling their souls with humble thanksgiving to the Almighty for at last granting them their hearts' desire. He pictured to himself Jerusalem, a city of dazzling light, set high upon a hill, and he dreamt that he was riding up that hill at the head of a long line of black-robed knights, slowly and reverently towards that Holy City, with its glistening walls and gates of purest gold, and those golden gates flew open to let him in. . . .

He thought he should die of joy and happiness as he rode through the gates into the city; from every pinnacle and

turret trumpets sounded, and a loud voice proclaimed : " He who beholds Jehovah must die ! " . . .

These mysterious visions and fancies he had wisely, though with a great effort, suppressed in the call to his followers, but they had gained strength from the fact that God *had* so guided the course of this troublesome world, that its affairs had come to a happy termination *before* June 24th, by the signal defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Surely this was a token for good !

Before reaching Trieste, too, he had the satisfaction of knowing what was going to be the fate of his fallen foe, now that he was safe in the hands of the English. Whilst the dream-ship with heavenly strains would be slowly but surely conveying Gustaf Adolf towards the Sacred City, an English warship would, with equal certainty, be conveying the " BEAST from the bottomless pit " many a league across a storm-tossed ocean, where he would be finally set ashore on a desolate, rocky island, the barren cliffs of which rose precipitously from the sea, and whence it would not be so easy for him to return to mar the peace of Europe. Gustaf Adolf understood *now* why Providence had retarded his journey to the Holy Land. . . . It was that he might eventually accomplish it in comfort and with a mind at rest.

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A few years before, when in Switzerland, Gustaf Adolf had been greatly struck with the work and system of the noble Pestalozzi, and had expressed to him and his associates how perplexed he (Gustaf Adolf) had often been to see how, from the throne downwards, people seemed ever ready to unite for unworthy and evil purposes, whilst it was only with much difficulty that men could be induced to join in promoting that which was good and commendable. This was more especially brought home to him during his stay in Trieste, whilst he was waiting for applications from would-be " Black Brethren."

A few arrived at last, but not as he wished and had notified—one from each of the countries specified ; nor did they look

as he had expected, neither were their names such as he had dreamt of, nor had they any kind of musical instrument with them, nor the four thousand guilders in Augsburg notes, leave alone the two thousand in current coin ! He had fancied that those desirous of joining the pilgrimage would have appeared rather in the guise of the apostles and holy men whose pictures had made such an impression upon him when he had seen them in the galleries at Dresden and Vienna or in illustrated Bibles, and it was to still more enhance that resemblance that he had desired them to let their beards grow. The latter condition they had fulfilled to the letter, but when one after another presented himself with an ashy face and scrubby, unkempt beard, they certainly had more the appearance of highwaymen and robbers than . . . prophets and apostles ! The last to apply was an Albanian Turk from the city of Sesamis. Turkey was one of the countries not included in the list of the chosen ten, but the man seemed so exceedingly anxious to leave Europe and visit the East in the company and under the leadership and protection of the "Duke of Holstein-Eutin," that Gustaf Adolf thought he must only look to the purity of the applicant's motive, and overlook his nationality ! Such passionate zeal as *he* exhibited could not but be genuine, he opined, and after another scrutinising look at the man, and a few moments' further reflection, the Albanian was duly enrolled among the "Brotherhood."

The "Grand Master" was not a little perplexed and annoyed when he presently discovered that these "Black Brethren" were one and all entirely without funds, and had taken it for granted that they were to live altogether at *his* expense, not only in Trieste, but until they should arrive at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. But as they had now gathered round him, inspired, no doubt, by the same sacred spark (!) which had drawn countless followers to the banners of Godfrey of Bouillon, Tancred, Richard the Lion-hearted, and other pious and Christian Leaders, he must not suffer their confidence in him to be disappointed ; so he would submit with all humility to the inscrutable will of God, and endeavour to keep his faithful followers in comfort and plenty in that most expensive of cities .

Trieste. For himself, he must be as economical as possible. What matter if *he* were lodged in the poorest inn, and endured endless privations and hardships, so long as he accomplished his aim ?

The stay at Trieste had been of much longer duration than had been anticipated. When he had planned and dreamt about this expedition everything had appeared so easy, so smooth and natural, and all of a sudden difficulties, obstacles, and all sorts of hindrances seemed piled mountain-high. now the journey had really begun. Even his dream-ship could not sail before he had received a firman from the Ottoman Government, with permission to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem "without let or hindrance." When it came, it was only made out for the "Duke of Holstein-Eutin and the servants attached to his person," but not for any retinue or followers as he had especially asked. Who would have thought of offering such gross insult to the "Black Brethren" who were to accompany him, and how was he to know that the Chargé d'Affaires of the Sublime Porte in Vienna, who had compiled the firman, and whom he at once requested to alter it as he had expressly stipulated, would send a reply still more offensive to the Brethren, to the effect that an unlimited pass could not be granted to the Duke of Holstein-Eutin, as certain suspicion attached to a Turk amongst their number.

With increased wrath Gustaf Adolf maintained that the firman sent him was not merely an insult to himself but an injury also to the prestige of the Sultan, to whom he forthwith despatched an autograph letter to Constantinople, in which he demanded the required extension of the pass, and at the same time begged for a "permit of residence" in Jerusalem. When the express messenger who had been sent with it returned at length, the only answer he brought was that the Sultan refused to entertain either request !

Gustaf Adolf was nearly beside himself with disappointment and anger. As everybody knew, it was impossible to set foot on Turkish territory without a firman, and none knew better than himself how useless and impossible it was for him and his followers to prolong their stay at Trieste ; but neither did he

deem it possible to leave in the lurch now those who had joined him with such perfect trust. Moreover, his visions and dreams of this expedition had been so singularly vivid that, in spite of the stumbling-blocks laid in his way by the Sultan, he firmly believed all difficulties would be cleared away if once he and his adherents were safely aboard some ship. If they could only get on one of the ships cruising among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, it would anyhow be motion and movement in the right direction, when, doubtless, God would at once choose out some man who would cajole the Sultan into granting permission for the journey unhindered to the desired end. By any means available Gustaf Adolf *meant* to wring that permission from him. It would not be the first time that a King of Sweden had been in conflict with the powers of Turkey.

This idea cheered his drooping spirit to some degree, and he could no longer calmly remain at Trieste. The funds he still had in hand would not last for ever, and nothing in the world should induce him to waste the precious coin in the Illyrian city. His difficulties with regard to Jerusalem were no hindrance to his leaving Trieste, and having provided himself with a pass from the King of France, Gustaf Adolf and his pilgrims went on board a Spanish vessel bound for Corfu on October 7th.

But . . . he had not embarked on a "mysterious ship," steered and propelled by "invisible hands"; quite the contrary. This Spanish ship was old and rotten, and scarcely any longer seaworthy, and the ocean was *not* like a "mirror," but unmercifully rough and boisterous. In the fierce north wind every spar in the superannuated "tub" creaked and groaned, and more than once, in order to keep up his courage, Gustaf Adolf had to repeat to himself: "We are cruising in the Archipelago among the fair isles of Greece"; but he was painfully reminded of certain tempestuous crossings from Åbo to Stockholm, and Stralsund to Karlskrona! From the huge hold in which his followers were quartered, and to which his stuffy, comfortless cabin was in close proximity, he could hear unmistakable sounds of violent quarrels of *mal de mer*, and rather and curses took the place of the prayers and psalmody in which

“ pious men on pious errand bent ” might have been supposed to take refuge in the hour of danger, whenever the boat gave a fresh and unexpected roll. They were not *quite* the “ heavenly strains ” of his dreams !

When he could no longer stand these sounds he dressed and, wrapt in his military cloak, took up his position aloft, keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the horizon, trying to ignore the white-crested, seething waves between. At every lurch the ship gave he held on to the railing with his right hand, whilst with his left he stroked the unaccustomed beard grown to remind himself of the sacred object of the journey.

But whether the storm raged or the sunshine flooded the seascape and the dusky crew set every sail to catch the breeze, *nothing* around him was as he had seen it before his mind’s eye.

The last few years, when he had been working out and planning this journey, he had always imagined himself surrounded by congenial spirits, who would never gainsay any of his views or in any way oppose him, which it seemed, especially just now, people *had* been doing all his life. When he was King they had been obliged to be humble and submissive, and he had often deeply regretted that no one, not even those he had trusted and valued most, had had courage to battle against the stream as he had done ; but since he had been no longer King, contradiction and opposition seemed to meet him on every side . . . and this expedition was to have been so very different !

He meant the men who went with him to look upon it as he did—a very special favour from Heaven ! Like himself, they were to have the feeling that as soon as they sailed from Trieste the worldly cares and anxieties from which they were seeking relief were to be cast away, buried in oblivion, and their hearts and minds to be occupied only with meditation on the sacred places where Christ had lived and taught, and with visions of the beauteous city in which His tomb was enshrined, watched and guarded by devout brethren. He had dreamt that they would sit in a friendly circle on deck during the voyage, encouraging and edifying one another with holy converse.

So far as "sitting in a circle" was concerned, his dreams *were* realised; but no one except himself had anything to say which, with the utmost stretch of imagination, could be called "edifying," and when he saw with how little interest or attention they listened to him, how lamentably ignorant they were of Biblical lore, and how utterly hopeless it was to expect them to say anything which might in the least degree edify himself or any other sane (?) person, he took refuge in silence, and, inwardly groaning, began the weary tramp as his custom was.

It mattered little whether he paced the deck on board ship instead of the roughly-sanded floor of the inn-parlour, or the smooth, well-polished boards of his room in the Palace—everywhere he was grievously alone with his thoughts, past and present.

They had landed at Corfu and at Prevosa on the Albanian coast, and on January 2nd were nearing Patras, where Gustaf Adolf hoped to find the firman Ali Pascha had promised to procure waiting for him; there, too, he had thought of fitting out or purchasing a vessel to take him and his pilgrims to Constantinople, thence to continue the journey to Jerusalem. His thoughts involuntarily turned to the aimless wanderings of Ulysses on these waters. It seemed wonderful to him to behold the scenes of which he had read as a little boy, when studying *Telemachus* with his French master, Des Roches. That book had often come into his mind when wandering among the luxurious vegetation of Corfu, and at the first glimpse he caught of the illustrious mount, so clearly reflected in the blue water of the harbour of Patras. He felt singularly light-hearted just now, for in the night he had dreamt that the expected firman had been handed to him here, at Patras, by a messenger from the Sultan of Turkey, in a casket richly set with precious stones, and when he had unrolled the firman he had found not only the permission to proceed peacefully on his journey, but also to take up his residence *permanently* in Jerusalem, if he were so minded.

He was standing thinking about this dream and lost in contemplation of the lovely scene before him, so far surpassed

anything he had ever beheld before. It was as if the ship had cast anchor in a bed of azure clouds !

Suddenly he was startled by a voice at his elbow saying, in very bad French : “ Mister Duke, I have got something very important to say to you before we get into the boats to take us ashore.”

Gustaf Adolf turned deliberately round and fixed his eyes angrily on the intruder. He would certainly have administered a violent rebuke to the person addressing him so familiarly, had he not remembered, just in time, that this day he was not a King, only a pilgrim, and that the man before him was his companion, bent upon the same object as himself ; therefore he said in his most conciliatory tone : “ What is it you would say, Brother ? ”

The man, a Greek by birth, answered : “ I and my mates would like to have part of our pay to-day. We want it.”

“ Your . . . *pay* ? What are you talking about ? . . . Pay for what ? ”

The speaker looked so amazed and taken aback that the “ Black Brother ” quite realised that the “ Grand Master ” of his “ Order ” did, indeed, not know what his demand referred to ; therefore it was all the more needful to make the matter quite clear to him.

“ I am naturally talking of the pay, for the sake of which we entered Your Highness’ service and consented to undertake this journey.”

“ *My* service. . . . Did you not all of you undertake to enter the service of God, as I did myself ? What *can* you be thinking of ? ”

Presently, however, a light seemed to dawn upon him, and he cried, in a voice trembling with agitation : “ Was it for *money* you joined me, and is it only for the sake of filthy lucre that you undertook this pilgrimage to Jerusalem ? ”

He was so excited that his whole frame seemed to be convulsed, so that the Greek, who believed he was going to faint dead away, pushed a chair forward, on which Gustaf Adolf immediately sank. Suddenly, from deathly white his face grew scarlet, his usually cold blue eyes blazed with indignation ; he

jumped up from the chair and exclaimed in a tone of righteous anger :

“How dared you cheat and deceive me in that manner? My proclamation was worded clearly and distinctly, and in it there was not one word of any payment to you. On the contrary, I stipulated that each one of you on joining should be in possession of four thousand Augsburg guilders, but as you were not, I winked at it and kept you at my own cost, because I believed that you were actuated by the like motives as myself . . . that, oppressed by the ills and wickedness of the world, you were seeking rest and peace . . . longing for that far-off land. . . . You have deceived me, and you are no better than common cheats and adventurers. Tell your comrades that they have grossly misunderstood my words if they think they are in *my* service instead of in God’s, and demand pay from me ; they have grievously mistaken the object of the journey, and I warn them to keep out of my sight. Those who share your way of thinking are at liberty to leave me at Patras, and if there is not *one* honest, upright man among you all, I can go on alone. Be off with you . . . nay, stop one minute—stop, I say, and answer me one question . . . tell me the truth . . . (what is truth ?). . . . Have you *all* come *only* for the sake of gain ? ”

He had tightly gripped the arm of the Greek, and was shaking his clenched fist into the bearded face, as he had been in the habit of doing when, as King of Sweden, any of his subordinates had provoked or angered him. The individual thus addressed lamely stammered : “ Some of the ‘ Black Brethren ’ wanted to go a long way away, not exactly for the sake of pay, but because of other weighty reasons which rendered it advisable that they should leave their country, and, if possible, seek some great man’s protection.”

“ Perhaps, then, some of the ‘ Black Brethren ’ have been thieves and murderers, eh ? ”

“ I can’t give you any information with respect to that,” the Greek replied.

“ Is there not *one* honest, single-hearted man among you, then, like myself ? ”

“ I couldn’t say, Your Highness.”

On the verge of breaking down, and in quite an altered tone, Gustaf Adolf said : “ You have destroyed my most sacred and cherished dream by your wickedness ; go your way, and leave me to myself.”

Then he hurriedly ran down the steep and narrow stairs to his own cabin. There he sat down and opened his Bible ; he was still reading when the captain came to tell him that not only were the French and English Consuls waiting to pay their respects to him, but the Swedish and Russian and deputies from the Austrian Consulate were also craving permission to wait upon His Highness. The captain noticed, with some surprise, that the Duke’s eyes were red and swollen, as though with recent weeping.

Gustaf Adolf’s last night’s dream, alas ! had not come true. They were all there, with the *exception* of the messenger from the Turkish Sultan, who was to have met him at Patras with the firman allowing him and his followers to pursue their pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

However, that evening, as he was getting into one of the small boats to be rowed to land, something occurred of which he had *not* dreamt. The cannon on the fort fired a salute as he was being rowed across and stepped ashore. The thunder of the cannon was re-echoed again and again from the mountains round Patras, and this demonstration of respect seemed in some degree to dispel the depression which had clouded his spirit since the morning when he had been so bitterly disillusioned. For the moment he almost forgot that he was a pilgrim and not a Sovereign . . . this was like old times to him ; to be once more honoured as a King amid such exquisite surroundings. He tried to keep still and not show his excitement and emotion, but his face twitched and his hands shook as the cannon continued to roar.

He spent a whole week at Patras waiting, waiting for the messenger from Constantinople, but as none ever came he sailed away to Italy in a small boat he had chartered ; but before finally leaving the gulf of Patras he made a little *détour* to Lepanto. The Governor of that island was a son of Ali Pascha’s,

and Gustaf Adolf was unwilling to leave Grecian waters before making one more attempt at least to obtain the much-desired firman.

If, in his disgust, he had not left the personal pass he had received from the Ottoman representative in Vienna at Trieste, he might now, after his bitter disappointment anent the "Black Brethren," have continued the journey to Jerusalem by himself. But there it was. . . . He had left it behind, and without it he could not so much as set a foot on Turkish ground. His dream that a man would be found to cajole the Sultan was not fulfilled either, and he had to turn his back upon Lepanto without having obtained what he had come for. Now he had no alternative but to return to the Continent of Europe and to reluctantly abandon the expedition, which it was evidently not the will of Providence that he should accomplish. He could not get the story of Ulysses out of his head; he remembered that when he had first read about Telemachus, he had always thought how dreadfully tired and weary of wandering this poor Father Ulysses must have been. It seemed like a dream that he should have thought that so many years ago; or was it a dream now that he himself was roving along the same track, sailing among the same classic islets, and that he had visited Ithaca purely for the sake of those old recollections?

When his boat approached the shores of Italy and steered towards Ancona, which, rising in the form of an amphitheatre from the water, looks so wonderfully imposing, with its numerous churches and spires, a feeling of loneliness and loss took possession of Gustaf Adolf. He had lost his visions and illusions about the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for ever, and the stern, prosaic realities of life once more weighed heavily upon him. In November Prince Gustaf would complete his seventeenth year, then he was to go to his father, wherever he might be at the time. Gustaf Adolf had ordained it so, and so it must be. The Prince's birthday should immediately be followed by an act which should rivet the attention of the universe upon him and his house, and call forth unmitigated surprise and admiration. That splendid act was to inaugurate a new era in his life, and from the very beginning shed a halo over the

very plebeian name he meant to adopt from that time forward until his life's end. The act he meditated was to be his last public one as a Prince of Royal descent, and even before its completion he intended to drop his princely name and title, and to simply call and sign himself "G. A. Gustafson." He had many cogent reasons for taking this step.

In order to raise funds for the journey to Jerusalem, which had been attended with such enormous expense through the deceptive conduct of the "Black Brethren," he had been obliged to dip so deeply into his purse that he could no longer afford to live in accordance with a royal name or title; as a private individual he could live as simply and economically as he pleased, without being obliged to run into debt or defraud anyone, neither would he have so many claims upon his purse, and he would have to thank no one, not even the King of Denmark (the present head of his house) for the name and title he meant to be known by in future.

The one bright spot in the gloom which the total failure of the expedition to the East threatened to cast over the remaining years of his life, was the thought that, before the year was out, his son would be with him, and that no meddlesome, envious advisers would be there to counteract his father's influence, and this happy prospect brought him comfort and consolation as the English boat he had hired at Corfu daily brought him nearer his journey's end. Then, also, there was healing balm in the anticipated consummation of his *grand coup*.

As the ship entered the harbour of Ancona he ordered the flag which betokens the presence of a Royal traveller on board, to be run up by the side of the Union Jack. He was rather curious to see what sort of a reception they would give him in this little pontifical town. It was a most cordial and courteous one. All persons arriving from Corfu had to remain a certain time in quarantine, and he was not permitted to land until suitable accommodation had been found for him. Members of the French and English Consulates, to whom he wanted to speak, were not allowed on board, but had to row up to the ship's side and converse with the Duke of Holstein-Eutin from their boat. But not many hours later the papal ensign

was run up on Ancona's highest and most conspicuous fort and cannon from all directions fired a royal salute, which attention Gustaf Adolf appreciated even more when he heard that that was accorded to reigning Sovereigns only, as a rule. The ships lying in the harbour also seemed to have received orders to hoist their flags, for all at once every boat was beflagged, and Gustaf Adolf experienced a curious sort of feeling when, as he was walking up and down on deck, he suddenly discovered that two ships, lying amongst many others, had run up the *Swedish* flag. In the general survey of the boats dressed in his honour his eyes invariably sought out and rested on these two, and he thought somewhat ruefully of the unpleasantness to which they might be exposed on their arrival home if the Swedish Consul at Ancona chose to report them for the honour they wished to show to their former King. He had more than half a mind to send them a warning, but he was so much moved by the thought that this was probably the last day and the last occasion upon which the Swedish flag would wave from the top of any mast in *his* honour, that he did not feel equal to bidding it be lowered; moreover, then the two boats would look so bare among the other festive ones, and he could not bear the thought that perhaps they might feel hurt and offended.

Crowds of idlers thronged the harbour to see the landing of the Royal traveller, which took place not without a certain amount of ceremony and display. The ship's boat which was to convey Gustaf Adolf on shore flew the French flag fore and the English flag aft; a Turkish boat followed, also flying the French flag; and a third, which brought up the rear and had the "health inspectors" on board, flew the papal ensign. The weather was magnificent with brilliant sunshine, and the three boats looked as if they had but now taken part in a regatta!

All eyes were fixed on the pale-faced man in the blue coat sitting in the stern of the first. The long beard which had been so much discussed had been shaved off, the moustache was there as it had always been, and his face was grave and sad.

He had been rudely awakened from the dream that he was

a pilgrim on the way to Jerusalem, but the right royal reception accorded him here, and wherever else he landed along that coast, almost lulled him into another dream . . . of the days when he was King, and flags waved and cannon thundered in welcome to him. With truly royal liberality he rewarded the captain and crew of the vessel which had safely brought him to Ancona. The captain had asked one thousand six hundred crowns for the voyage, but Gustaf Adolf had given him two thousand, and the rest of the men were tipped in proportion.

He restricted his own expenses at Ancona to a minimum ; he was often sad and depressed, and haunted by gloomy thoughts ; he sometimes reflected that if, as a child, he could have foreseen his own fate, he would have said of himself as he had then said of Ulysses : “ How dreadfully weary and tired that poor man must be ! ”

CHAPTER XLIII

THE BITTER CUP

GUSTAF ADOLF sat in his travelling chariot on his way from Innsbruck to Germany. When on the other side of the Alps he had unceasingly harped upon the failure of his journey to the Holy Land ; he thought the reason of that fiasco had been that, in answer to his appeal, he had had to deal with so many who had been entire strangers to him, and with a potentate who was neither a European nor a Christian, and, therefore, utterly unworthy of trust. There would be nothing of that sort, at any rate, to spoil the act he was contemplating at the coming-of-age of his son . . . none but friendly and Christian princes should have anything to do with *that*. He was thinking it over as the horses, with great difficulty, dragged the carriage up the steep incline of the Brenner Pass, and he had settled most of the details and was in a comparatively quiescent frame of mind, when with much grinding and squeaking of brakes, and not a little jolting, the descent began on the other side.

A few days were spent at Innsbruck, and when he left that city he was fully persuaded in his own mind that his plans had been so carefully and well matured that no possible obstacle *could* come in the way to mar them ; only a few very insignificant trifles remained to be decided upon, and as soon as he should come to the end of his journey he would communicate with the persons whose co-operation he desired. First of all with his son Gustaf, as being the hero of the day. As the carriage wended its way along the highways of the Tyrol and Southern Germany, Gustaf Adolf saw the whole of his meditated *coup* unroll itself before him.

The ancient city of Frankfort was to be the scene of this event, memorable in the future history of the nations, and he was going to ask the Mayor to allow him the use of the magnificent "Emperor's" Hall or the richly fitted town hall, maybe even the Protestant Church of Saint Catherine—he had not quite made up his mind which would suit him best. The ceremonial he had settled entirely to his satisfaction, and he felt proud and pleased when he went over the imposing scene in his mind. Whichever he should finally decide upon, one of the municipal buildings or the church, the magnates of the city were to meet him and his son in solemn state at the entrance and walk in front of them, either to a raised dais, if in either of the halls, or to the chancel if in the church; gilt chairs were to be placed for them there, one on the right for himself, and the other on the left for Prince Gustaf.

The German Princes invited were to sit in a semi-circle immediately below, the rest of the building to be occupied by representatives of the church, burghers, and other worthies of honourable repute. Perfect silence was to be observed, when he (Gustaf Adolf) should rise, and in clear and solemn tones declare Prince Gustaf to be of full age. As a Prince is born a "subject" of the King, the latter has a right to fix the age at which the Prince shall attain his "majority." In this instance Gustaf Adolf had curtailed the usual age (eighteen) by a twelvemonth, for the reason that he wished to remove his son from the influence of his mother, and put an obstacle in the way of her endeavours to secure for him the Crown of Sweden. After that declaration he would solemnly read aloud to the Assembly his own "Act of Abdication," which he had had no chance of doing to the Assembly of the States in Stockholm. He had always hoped to have an opportunity of being able to prove to the whole of Europe that it had been his own voluntary act and deed, drawn up at Gripsholm whilst in confinement there, in the year 1809. If for nothing else but that, Gustaf Adolf would look forward eagerly to November 9th. Another equally stirring act should follow closely upon this. He would publicly appeal to his son to renounce, in the presence of that

assemblage, *his* claim to the Crown of Sweden, though it was his by right, and none could lawfully dispute it. . . .

This, then, was that stupendous event which was to revolutionise and astonish all Europe . . . this was to be Prince Gustaf's first act in public after coming of age. It was not only to be an example to other princes of royal blood, it was to show, too, that he was ready to follow the guidance of his father, thus evincing his filial esteem and respect for that parent, which demonstration none would value more highly than that father himself.

To that, his declaration, Prince Gustaf was firmly to adhere, so that no idle slanderer or gossip could say the son wished to force himself upon a people which had acted in such a cowardly manner towards his father.

Prince Gustaf was to make his entry into Frankfort as a Prince of the Royal House of Sweden, and Gustaf Adolf was anxious to have an escort of Frankfort dragoons for him. He would write to the Kurfürst (Elector) of Hesse-Darmstadt, the Grand Duke of Baden, and . . .

Yes, that ninth of November, 1816, was a day to look forward to, a red-letter day as it had been in 1779, when his son had first seen the light . . . a day . . .

He could get no farther—he was too excited to think any more—so he leant back in the corner of the carriage and closed his eyes.

Ever and anon he fancied he was rising from his chair in the chancel of St. Catherine's and beginning his harangue, and he thought all eyes were fixed upon him, whilst his own rested with pride and affection on his son.

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The aged Kurfürst, Wilhelm I of Hesse, sat in his study in the castle at Cassel, reading a letter he had just received with mixed feelings of intense indignation and considerable surprise. He had had to contend with many adverse circumstances in his life ; he had been driven from his Electorate by Napoleon, and with his family had been compelled to seek refuge in Denmark whilst Jerome Buonaparte, as King of

Westphalia, had been set to rule over Hesse, and the Kurfürst had only been reinstated three years ago. He was a somewhat austere ruler, with rather strong opinions regarding princely prerogatives, and he thought he had never perused an epistle so lacking in deference and common courtesy as the one he held in his hand at the present moment ; moreover, it had been penned in his own good city of Hanau, and by a near relative, the son of his wife's own sister, a Princess of Denmark. He made an ugly grimace as he read it for the second time, half-aloud.

“ UNCLE (it began),

“ I must confess that I was not prepared for such a cool reception on your part. I have now been here since August 11th, and I wrote to my Aunt that she should acquaint you with the object of my stay in your dominions ; in spite of this you have never taken the least notice of my presence. I am fully aware that arriving here under the name of the ‘Count of Eutin’ I could not expect a great official reception, but I know that there are different degrees of ceremony, and I know, too, that these cannot be altogether omitted by mere accident. I am also quite aware, Uncle, that you have the honour of being united in marriage to a Princess of the Royal blood and that, through her, I have become a near connection of yours, which, perhaps, makes me more susceptible than I should otherwise be to your lack of consideration and attention. Kindly explain to me the reason for your acting in this manner, and excuse the honest expression of my feelings. I am, Uncle, with kind regards, your nephew,

“ GUSTAF ADOLF.

“ Hanau, 1816.”

“ Impudence ! Impertinence ! ” said the Elector out loud. “ It shall not be long before I shall very plainly let him know the reason why I cannot take any notice of my “ nephew ” G. A. Gustafson's projects and ideas. . . . Upon my word ! . . . I will answer him. . . . ”

He had stood a while with the letter in his hand, now he crumpled it up, threw it on his desk, and brought his fist down hard upon it, after which he drew his snuffbox from his breeches' pocket and solaced himself with a good pinch of snuff.

The aged Elector was in old-fashioned military dress, with powdered hair and a pigtail; he had re-introduced both, as well as the "cat," among his soldiers as soon as he had again become their Commander-in-Chief. He looked exceedingly put out as he sat down to write a reply to that letter.

"NEPHEW (he began),

"One has a lot of trouble with feckless folk who cannot keep quiet, and must always be fussing themselves and worrying other people, and whose heads are full of ridiculous ideas which they are bent on carrying out, whether they are feasible or not. Your expedition to Jerusalem was such an idea, and so is your project with regard to your son's coming-of-age, which is not of the very slightest interest to anybody in the world. *I* know very well *why* you are staying in my territory. You want me to let you have a military escort for the grand entry you have planned for your son at Frankfort, and you have made the same request to the Grand Duke of Baden and Prince Christian of Hesse-Darmstadt; besides, you expect the city of Frankfort to furnish you with a regiment of dragoons, whilst you yourself, on horseback, will escort the lad to the town hall, where, with ludicrous pomp and ceremony you intend to publicly announce his coming-of-age, whereupon *he* is to declare *his* renunciation of the Swedish throne, or his resignation of his claim to the Crown, which you are under the impression *you* have done. All that I know well enough, and I can only say . . ."

He did not go on, but tore this letter into little bits, which he threw angrily on the floor. Then he began another.

"NEPHEW,

"I know you are staying in my State awaiting the arrival of your son, for whom you sent to join you at Darmstadt. If *I* were your son I should *not* come to make the statement you desire in public. What an unpleasant impression such an utterly unnecessary and uncalled-for declaration would create at the Courts of St. Petersburg and Stockholm. Besides, it might be most injurious to the young man's future interests if circumstances should ever alter . . ." ("And what is there

that does not alter in this world ? ” mumbled the old Kurfürst, refreshing himself with a pinch of snuff, from which he seemed to derive great comfort, before he again took up his pen) “. . . and the present Crown-Prince, for some reason or another, *not* succeed to the throne. I should be very much astonished if the Court of Baden, and first and foremost, of course, the mother of your son, did not violently oppose such a provoking plan, which would ruin the young man’s prospects for good and all. I do not believe, either, that the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt is likely to compromise himself by lending you a military escort for the occasion any more than I am myself. As for the city of Frankfort, why on earth should *it* lend itself to be the place for a spectacle which absolutely does not concern it in the least. . . . ? ”

No ; that letter would not quite do to send, either.

“ *Potz-Donnerwetter !* ” ejaculated the Kurfürst, “ one might waste all the precious time one has trying to concoct an answer to an impudent epistle full of reproach and upbraiding ! ”

He made another attempt thus : “ When my nephew, G. A. Gustafson, chooses to write me a polite letter I shall send him a polite reply . . . not otherwise. Such productions as his last I do *not* answer.”

The Kurfürst ground his teeth at the “ production ” as he passed by the table on which he had thrown it and stalked out of the room.

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Had Gustaf Adolf had a chance of seeing the last letter the Kurfürst had written, and then destroyed, he would indeed have been exceedingly wroth, though ere long circumstances occurred which went to prove how truly the writer had prophesied. Every letter Gustaf Adolf had written from Hanau, and subsequently from Frankfort, met with a decided refusal. A few recipients enlarged upon the insurmountable difficulties in the way, and the impossibility of his being able to carry out the idea which now seemed the *one* object of his life. *How* he had looked forward to that ninth of November ! He had never dreamt that *anything* could stand in the way of the fulfilment

of this chimera ! More appalling than all was the fact that Prince Gustaf positively refused to join his father, either at Darmstadt or anywhere else !

Gustaf Adolf had had an awful dream before he received his son's letter. He had dreamt that he was in the Church of Saint Catherine, surrounded by clergy and a deputation of the burghers, waiting for the arrival of his son, when suddenly Charles XII had stood before him, crying : " Make haste and depart hence, you have no business *here* ! " Last night he had had the same dream !

He wrote again to Prince Gustaf, and had received the same terse, definite reply. He would *not* come.

But Gustaf intended that he *should* ; if not of his own free will . . . well, he must be *forced* to come.

It was not only Prince Gustaf who opposed his will and wished to set himself up against his father, though his defection was by far the worst to bear. . . . Everything and everybody seemed determined to thwart him. When he had finally arranged all the details of this (to-be) most unique and imposing drama, he was mortally offended when the municipality of Frankfort informed him that they had no hall at their disposal suitable for such a demonstration. Prince Christian of Hesse-Darmstadt had written to say that he would be very pleased to receive a visit from Gustaf Adolf, but regretted that he was quite unable to furnish him with a military escort.

It was the answer from his brother-in-law the Grand-Duke of Baden, however, which wounded him most sorely. Gustaf Adolf had given him to understand that if Prince Gustaf persisted in his determination not to come to him he would resort to stringent measures and *fetch* him. Now the Duke had peremptorily forbidden him to do that ; he said it rested entirely with the boy's guardian, the Emperor Alexander of Russia, to control the Prince's actions, and to decide the age at which he should attain his majority.

Whilst Gustaf Adolf sat perusing this letter from Baden a violent altercation seemed to be going on at the door of the hostel where he had taken up his quarters ; angry and excited voices reached his ear as he tried to digest that un-

compromising epistle and one from his son brought by the same post. In the latter Prince Gustaf gave as his chief reason for not being able to obey his father in reference to his birthday, that he had pledged his word of honour to his mother to make no arrangements, and to take no steps of any sort or kind, either in the present or the future, without *her* full approval and consent.

“ . . . His *mother*? . . . What about his father? Am I not his own father, who surely has the greatest right to do what he thinks best with his son? Am *I* to stand by and look on whilst he dances to the Emperor Alexander’s false and treacherous tunes? But he *shall* come . . . he *must*. . . I will not stand this gratuitous slight—this humiliation. If he is not here on the day I have appointed, and I cannot force him into obedience, then . . . all will be over between us for ever! I will never, *never* see him again!”

He stamped his foot violently on the ground, and almost howled with rage, grief, and disappointment.

Meanwhile the altercation at the front door had not yet ceased, and in his present state of mind the vulgar sounds jarred horribly upon his nerves.

For the third time that wretched dream of Charles XII and the Church of Saint Catherine had visited him in the night, and . . . such a dream repeated three times is a sure precursor of ill. The royal wraith’s stern rebuke, “You have nought to do here,” had made a deep impression upon Gustaf Adolf. . . . In his dream he remembered thinking: “*Is there anything to do but to wait for the arrival of my son?*” He had felt a strong inclination to fall on his knees in the middle of the church, and before the congregation, and say to the apparition which threatened him: “I will go my way for good, I will never any more trouble either the living or the dead, if I can but see the desire of my heart fulfilled, and have my son with me to teach and guide, and triumphantly to show the world how different are the principles and actions of princes born to a throne to those of upstarts and usurpers.” But he had not been able to stir or to speak; as one suddenly turned into stone he had stood and watched the multitude depart, until he had

been left solitary, face to face with the ghost of his great ancestor. Then he had woken in deadly fear and dread, and had tossed about restlessly the remaining hours of the night.

The quarelling became louder and louder, and Gustaf Adolf tried to find out who it could be who had the temerity to disturb him in that fashion. It proved to be the stableman and a groom who were having "a few words" together. In his most commanding voice the King shouted to them: "Be quiet down there, instantly!" But they heeded him not. In a rage he laid hold of the pistol which lay on the table, rushed to the door, and cried: "Silence, this moment! I will shoot the first man who dares to say a word, like a dog." Needless to say, the men were both silent at once; they did not even dare open their mouths to make any sort of apology, for they could plainly see that the august gentleman who called himself G. A. Gustafson was in a particularly bad and irritable humour this day; they were to have a proof of it not many minutes later.

A poor beggar had taken up his position just under G. A. Gustafson's window, and craved charity. He begged in a melancholy, whining tone, and meeting with no response, his voice became, if possible, more melancholy and insistent. All at once the tramping in the room above ceased, and the window was flung open as violently as the door had been a short while before.

"If you are not off in two minutes, I will put a bullet through your head," Gustaf Adolf cried, in the same hard tone he had used towards the two men.

The terrified mendicant hurried out of range with utmost speed, and the window was shut with a bang.

A few days later the almanack announced the advent of November 9th, the day that was to have been so wonderful, so unforgettable in the annals of the history of Europe!

Gustaf Adolf had spent the preceding day alone in his chamber, where he locked himself in, refusing to speak to or see any one. He was pondering as to how he could convey to his son, whether he were amenable or not, a fitting, adequate impression of that auspicious day, as it had been *meant* to be

kept. Prince Gustaf had not gone to his father, so his father would go to him, not in person, but by letter, and it should be one which would indelibly impress itself on the lad's mind. He had spent the whole day, from quite early morning to late in the night, composing it; he had altered and erased and added, until it was ready to be sent off now. The coach would be passing in about an hour, and he would himself safely put it into the hands of the postilion in charge of the mail-bag.

The epistle was scarcely more than an elaborate repetition of the "declaration" he had intended to make in public on the ninth, and it began :

"MY SON,

"I have fixed the date of November 9th as that on which Your Royal Highness shall be pronounced to have attained Your Majority . . . it is the anniversary of Your birthday, and You will then enter upon Your eighteenth year. I am ready to admit that it is full early, but my decision was based upon manifold and weighty reasons to be hereafter adduced.

"Your Royal Highness were born Heir-Apparent to the throne of Sweden. Europe and Christendom in general are but too well cognisant of the unfortunate circumstances which have led to Your exclusion from Your legitimate inheritance.

"If *my* proceedings, so far, have been called in question . . . how much more will *Yours*, on this solemn occasion, be open to criticism ! After the many wrongs, reverses, and cruel injustices I and my family have had to suffer, it was my bounden duty, as Your Father, to set matters in order as far as lay in my power ; but as nothing definite with regard to Your future could be arranged before You had come of age, I had, for the sake of Your happiness and welfare, to curtail the period of Your tutelage. As the all-important day drew near, I called upon Your Royal Highness to come to me, so that You might openly assert Your claim to the throne ; but before that, I felt it incumbent upon me to read publicly my own ' Act of Abdication,' after which You were at liberty to speak according to the dictates of Your conscience.

"My beloved Gustaf ! As the Swedish Nation had no com-

punction in dissolving the sacred tie which bound it to Your person, *Your* duties and responsibilities towards the people who so ruthlessly expelled You from their midst are also no longer binding upon You. What confidence can a nation which has acted in so ungrateful and unwarrantable a manner expect? And if they should, in like sort, forget the duty they owe to their new Ruler, I would not advise You, my son, to take any advantage thereof. You come of a line which originally was alien in Sweden, but the Swedes placed Your ancestors upon the throne of their own free choice. The Revolution of 1809 will not be an inducement to foreign princes to seek that throne . . . the army (or part of it) in open revolt, the King disarmed in his own apartment and by his own officers, and kept a captive in one of his own castles. . . . How could I, under such conditions, counsel You to have anything whatever to do with the Swedish people? If it pleased the Almighty to preserve Your life at that period of political unrest and wickedness, and to allow Your aged great-uncle, Karl, to rescue you from the imprisonment You shared with Father, Mother, and Sisters, shall You not be willing to acknowledge the goodness of God, which has watched over You from Your earliest days, and will You not seek to prove Your gratitude by leading a sane and reasonable life, free from any feeling of revenge? I pray You to especially remember the Words of Christ: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

"Yet, my son, it seems to me an imperative duty that those whom the Lord has called to rule *should* rule, but I think none other should strive after supremacy.

"Now I beg Your final solemn and serious decision whether You are minded to renounce Your throne—*YES* or *NO*?

"May Your answer be in the spirit of him by whom You were begotten, and which You shall loyally and faithfully endeavour to emulate unto Your life's end.

"(Signed) G. A. GUSTAFSON."

Next morning "G.A.G." took his seat in his travelling carriage *en route* for Darmstadt, where he still had a lingering

hope his son would join him ; but Prince Gustaf was not there, neither was he coming.

Gustaf Adolf put forth all the energy and strength of which he was possessed to enforce his will and carry through his scheme in spite of opposition from both mother and son. His purpose assumed inordinate proportions the more his thoughts and his imagination dwelt upon it ; he was ready to defy the universe so that he might gain possession of the boy.

He prevailed upon Prince Christian of Hesse-Darmstadt to undertake a journey to Karlsruhe, bearing the "protocol of the majority of Prince Gustaf" and a letter the latter had written, both of which had been read to Prince Christian ; but although he had promised to do his best to talk over Queen Frederica into consenting to a meeting between father and son, his efforts were not crowned with success. The *only* conditions upon which his request might have been granted he considered most offensive and objectionable ; if they met at all it was to be only on Baden territory and in the presence of witnesses. He had no notion of submitting to any such arrangement ; he maintained that no one in the world had a right to incite a son to disobedience towards his father, or to prevent a son going to him at that father's expressed desire. He put it down to the Queen's influence, and his anger against her was so great that it swallowed up his other grievances, and they were always "legion." He would never either forget or forgive her preventing his son's joining him ; no doubt it had been done because she knew that his father's influence would be in a diametrically opposite direction to *her* views and those of Polier, who did all that was possible to rouse Prince Gustaf's ambition and beguile him with hopes of the Crown of Sweden.

From the Grand Duke of Baden, to whom Gustaf Adolf applied next, he received no answer at all. Prince Gustaf wrote, it is true, most respectfully and nicely, but he always repeated his firm determination never to go against his mother's wishes. So Gustaf Adolf reluctantly made up his mind that everyone had conspired to wound, insult, and humiliate him.

But he was every whit as obstinate and headstrong as the

Queen. He turned to the Danish representatives at Frankfort and begged *their* co-operation in compelling his son to come to him ; but they very naturally declined to have anything to do with the matter.

Then he tried the Baden Diplomats in the same city ; but they had received stringent orders from high quarters on no account ever to meddle with the private affairs of His Royal Highness Prince "Gustafson," which order they most considerately and courteously brought to his notice.

Still he would *not* be balked. As his grand *coup* had not been permitted to come off on November 9th, 1816, it must come off on November 9th, 1817 ; and that which he failed to obtain in a friendly and pleasant way, must be obtained by other means. He felt equal to all emergencies, and was determined to stick at nothing so long as he could force his son into submission.

Once more he sought the aid of the Kurfürst Wilhelm of Hesse, but this time not with reproaches and sarcastic innuendoes, but with quite a humble request for a body of armed men who should claim and bring his son.

He was again at Hanau, and had written his petition from there on August 25th, 1817, and as his letter this time was couched in proper and polite language, he received as polite a reply from the Kurfürst. It ran as follows :

"To His Majesty, the former King of Sweden, at Hanau (*pro tem.*).

"Your Majesty have been good enough to show Your confidence in me by informing me of the unfortunate differences at present existing between Your Majesty on the one part, and Her Majesty the Queen and Your Son on the other. I much regret the pain which this unhappy division cannot fail to cause You ; but the present condition of affairs, and more especially the provisions of the 'German League' absolutely debar me from rendering You any assistance with an armed force. In any other direction I shall be pleased to prove to You the regard with which I have the honour to sign myself,

"YOUR MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL UNCLE AND SERVANT."

If Gustaf Adolf had been granted the help he required he most certainly would not have had any fault to find with his uncle's letter; as it was, he strongly protested against the superscription on the envelope: "To His Majesty," and complained to the police inspector who brought it to him.

"As a Prince of Royal blood I *am* entitled under the present grievous conditions to be addressed as 'Royal Highness,' " he said in the hissing, snarling tone he always adopted when vexed or annoyed.

It took him a week to make up his mind whether he would answer his uncle's letter or not; but his fingers itched to write and tell him a few unpleasant truths about the German 'League,' on which he had laid the burden of his refusal to help. Gustaf Adolf did not consider how prejudicial such a proceeding might be to himself, for if everything else failed he would have to apply to that "League" for assistance. However, the temptation was too great to be resisted; he must lay unction to his soul and say his say, aye, and word it after a fashion of his own, too, which he was quite aware was not always of the mildest. If he marred his own prospects by his pen or tongue it would not be the first time he had done so, nor, in all probability, would it be the last! For once the 'German League' should hear what a high-principled, sensible man thought of its members. So he indited an epistle to Kurfürst Wilhelm, in which he aired his views pretty freely.

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How was it possible that the Kurfürst of Hesse should persist in declining to give the aid required or to refuse a request made to him as "father" (by virtue of his age) of the German Princes, that he should go to Karlsruhe and say a few serious words to the Grand Duke of Baden and his sister, Queen Frederica, Prince Gustaf's mother? Moreover, he seemed altogether so unwilling to help that he would not even appeal to the 'German League' and induce *them* to remonstrate with the Court of Baden anent its sinfulness in influencing Prince Gustaf, greatly to his present and future hurt, to disregard and disobey his father's command? This had been the second preposterous

request with which his Consort's troublesome nephew had nearly worried the life out of the poor old Kurfürst, who again pleaded the laws of the "League" in support of his refusal. He had replied that it was not possible to lay such matters before the "League," which was pledged never to interfere with the *domestic* affairs of any German Prince. He hoped that this answer would suffice to crush Gustaf Adolf and *make* him give up his foolish, useless, and unnecessary project. But in this supposition the aged Kurfürst was entirely mistaken. Gustaf Adolf was not going to give up before he had exhausted all *impossible* means; for what others rightly deemed impossible, to *him* not only seemed possible, but even hopeful and encouraging! He fancied he saw a chance of help in a quarter where no sane person would have dreamt of looking for it, but which, in his desperate struggle, seemed no more difficult or peculiar than any of the others he had so unsuccessfully tried. . . . He meant to apply to the present Swedish Crown-Prince himself! And he did. He wrote begging him to espouse his cause by writing to the Emperor Alexander, and requesting that autocrat to adopt all means necessary to coerce Prince Gustaf into renouncing his claim to the Swedish throne; he dwelt upon the evident advantage it would be to the Crown-Prince chosen by the people, to have the support of the voluntary resignation of the legitimate heir to the Crown! Gustaf Adolf never for a moment doubted but that this stroke of policy (?) would enable him to gain his end and to keep his son.

Not so, however, thought Karl Johann, Crown-Prince of Sweden, "chosen of the people," and when his long-expected answer at last reached Gustaf Adolf, he was much amazed to find that Karl Johann considered his "advantage" lay in ignoring altogether that Prince Gustaf had any claim to resign. "When the Swedish nation resumed its lawful privileges and accepted Your Highness' abdication, which in no way influenced the people, it was their prerogative to choose a successor, and as they did not offer the Crown to Your Highness' son, his formal renunciation of what was never *his*, is decidedly superfluous," he said in the letter, which was most courteously worded. He also voiced his appreciation of the well-meant instructions

given by Gustaf Adolf to his son. He said : "The advice given to your son is such as a good father *would* give, especially one who, in conjunction with paternal affection, has a high regard for the duties his conscience imposes upon him." Gustaf Adolf perused the last paragraph several times.

"He seems to acknowledge the sincerity of my purpose, but he will not lift a finger to help me in carrying it out," he said to himself with a bitter feeling of disappointment which, after years of hard, unsuccessful struggling, at last overpowered him.

Alas! what is pleasing to God is not always so to His creatures!

Gustaf Adolf had strained every nerve for the consummation of an object which daily appeared more precious and sacred to him . . . he had hoped to be his son's counsellor and guide at the most important period of his life and that son had practically disowned him—he no longer had a son—he never wished to set eyes on him again. He had meant to show an edifying and elevating spectacle to the world in which he (Gustaf Adolf) would have played the most prominent part, and all united in denying him the opportunity of distinguishing himself on the world's stage. Ah, well . . . he would retire from that stage. He had himself chosen the humble patronymic of "Gustafson," with that he would now begin his private life; and that seemed the only one of all the plans he had formed which emperors, kings, and princes were not anxious, and took no pains to frustrate. They would graciously permit him to retire from their midst, and disappear in obscurity! Henceforth he would never be anything more than "Colonel Gustafson" to the end of his days. For good and all now he was severed from those who belonged to him.

He buried his face in his hands and his whole frame shook with convulsive sobs.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE MAN IN THE DILIGENCE

THE lumbering canary-coloured "Dilly," running between Frankfort and Basle, came clattering very consequentially down the main street of the village. The Postilion blew his horn with, seemingly, inexhaustible breath, and the stout and no longer quite youthful driver cracked his long whip with such consummate skill that, in the misty morning air, it sounded like ceaseless firing of small arms ; but he never touched the ears or flanks of the madly galloping horses. The huge, heavy vehicle swept grandly round the corner, as was its wont, and came to a halt at the door of a hostelry rejoicing in the name of "The Blue Star."

The two passengers in the interior of the coach were engaged in such subtle argument that they did not trouble to get out whilst fresh horses were being put to, and the three new passengers, who had been waiting on the high steps of the inn for the diligence to arrive, could see the silhouette of a French officer, with the order of the "Legion of Honour" on his breast, through the window on their side. He was, apparently, holding an animated conversation with a middle-aged gentleman in plain clothes. The French officer seemed to be talking fast and gesticulated a good deal, and the pale-faced man in the three-cornered hat, opposite to him, listening calmly as though he were hearing a report or a lecture. Occasionally he would shake his head, nod assent or look bored, and would interrupt the speaker with a few curt words. Only once during the fuss and commotion, inseparable from having new relays of horses, did he turn and look out of the window—giving a cursory glance at the trio waiting on the steps ; it consisted of an

elderly gentleman who might have passed for a schoolmaster, and two lads, probably students, whom he was taking for "a trip abroad." When the French officer lowered the window in order to say something to the landlord, the man in the tricorne immediately pulled it up again; he might have thought the November day was too chill to sit with the window open, or . . . he might not have liked the looks of the new-comers.

The tutor and his young friends could not see more, for the servants of the inn just then came out carrying huge boxes, bags, and dressing-cases, which amid much noise and confusion were hoisted on to the roof of the diligence, and the pedagogue had a fair amount of trouble to get at the breast-pocket of his big, handsome fur coat and extract therefrom with his cold, numbed fingers a long knitted purse, push back the silver rings, distribute "largesse" right and left, and take leave of the landlord, who opened the coach door for him with his own hand with much bowing and scraping. The two young men in green tunics got in first, and as they did so they politely raised their hats to the two men seated by the window. The Frenchman quickly lifted his hand in military salute, and the man in mufti removed his hat and courteously bowed to the two youths and the older man who at last managed to get in quite out of breath; having with much care deposited his purse in his breeches-pocket, with the help of the young men he divested himself of his fur coat, which he hung up on a peg by the window. Scarcely were they comfortably installed when the postilion blew his horn, and the driver with his cleverly handled whip and cracks set the horses off at a gallop over the hard, uneven cobbles. The noise and rattling were so tremendous that it was impossible to hear oneself speak. The Frenchman's lips moved continually, but his pale-faced companion shook his head, put his fingers in his ears, leant back, and closed his eyes with an air of utter weariness.

His sitting thus gave the new-comers an opportunity of taking a good look at him, which politeness had forbidden so long as he himself had sat there measuring them with his cold, steely blue eyes. Now they noticed that he was a man of

unusually slender build, with a long, fair moustache, and that he was clad in a blue overcoat, grey trousers, and boots with enormous spurs. There was something peculiar in the *tout ensemble* of the man in mufti ; his dress and his general bearing would have attracted attention anywhere. The French officer was like the usual type of his kind, and gave the impression that he had belonged to what had once, years ago, been called "*La grande Armée*."

He bore a striking likeness to the present Crown-Prince of the country from which the tutor and his pupils hailed.

The French officer and his companion had been discussing this singular resemblance, and the first words the trio had caught when the diligence left the cobbles and turned through the gates into the loamy country road had been : "Bernadotte" and "Suède" pronounced by the officer in a remark to his *vis-à-vis*, who took a long look at the landscape ere he replied, also in French :

"Yes, the present Crown-Prince seems indeed to have had luck on his side all along."

The officer sharply rejoined : "Decidedly, most undeserved good luck. In my opinion, a soldier who draws the sword against his own country, as that Bernadotte has done, does not merit such luck."

"From what I have heard, I should say that the Swedish army commanded by the Crown-Prince, which was under operations in Germany last year, did not make a very bloody onslaught on the French," said the man in the blue coat.

"If that was so, and I do not doubt but that you have been rightly informed, it was not because Bernadotte wished to spare the French, but the Swedes."

The three travellers on the other side of the coach tried hard to conceal the interest they took in the conversation. The two younger busily turned over the leaves of some English papers and magazines, and the older man kept his eyes on the pocket-book wherein he was apparently making important entries. Yet not one of the three lost a word.

The man in the tricorne continued speaking, and said very impressively : "It was the duty of the present Crown-Prince

of Sweden to act like a Swede and a patriot from the moment he became ruler of that country ; to him that duty would be an easy one, since he has, or at any rate always seems to have, good luck, which is certainly a valuable asset to a King of Sweden ; and he is reported to have that as regards weather . . . women . . . and war. Other folk, and great folk especially, who are pursued by what is commonly styled 'bad luck,' have no place in Sweden or among Swedes."

"Perhaps they have more in France and among Frenchmen, or some other nation," observed the French officer, with a smile which contrasted strangely with the other man's bitter earnest, as he answered :

"No, they have no place anywhere in this world. The only place for their bodies is a few feet below the ground . . . for their immortal souls . . . heaven . . . but, of course, nations too differ. For instance, at this moment the throne of France is occupied by one who had to endure cruel misfortunes the greater part of his life, whilst the man, who seemed to have been born under a lucky star, has fallen and is banished for ever from the kingdom. It was long before Law and Right gained the day . . . but we have lived to see the day of retribution. You may take my word for it, such things will not happen in Sweden."

"Excuse me, sir, but I think I must remind you that, much as I value your esteemed company, it was agreed that no views about Napoleon, nor anything concerning him, should be discussed between us. I had the honour to serve under him, and that is an honour one neither would nor could forget, however circumstances may shift or change ; that is the reason I mean to quit the Army as soon as I reach France. I have now completely recovered from the illness I contracted in prison. Having served under *him*, I feel that I could not serve under any other ruler of France. It is not always a question of good or bad luck, as you seem to think, sir. It is but too true that he has been deposed and exiled, but I and many others shall always be proud to think of him as our Emperor and our Master."

"You would not speak so if you were a Swede," replied the

man in the tricorne. "In Sweden it is the fashion to turn with all possible haste from the setting sun to worship the new rising light, whether his name be Carl August or Karl Johann."

"You are wrong there, sir; a good deal depends on the personality of the man who has luck with him or ill-luck against him, as you were pleased to observe; and that last King of Sweden was certainly *not* a Napoleon."

"Most certainly *not*, sir."

The two young Swedes had some difficulty in keeping their countenance at the vehement and energetic protest of their fellow-traveller, whose face had grown crimson as he spoke. Even the tutor looked up from his book with some surprise. After that there was silence in the diligence, which was negotiating a steep hill with considerable trouble.

At length the unexpected silence was broken by the last speaker; his face had regained its accustomed pallor: "But the present Crown-Prince is carrying out the policy of that King, I believe," he said in a rather loud voice, as if inviting contradiction.

It was all the Swedish schoolmaster could do to repress his desire to join in the conversation. The elder of the two youths cast an imploring look at him, as who should say: "Dear good master, now *do* answer him." But the tutor shook his head and made a sign to him to sit still, and not to disturb the conversation of the two men who were so engrossed in their talk that they did not even seem to be conscious that they were no longer alone in the coach.

"Now can you assert that there is no difference in the policy pursued by Bernadotte and that of the King of Sweden, sir? I should really like to know."

"I never said that there was *no* difference, I only said that the Crown-Prince was carrying out the intentions of Gustaf Adolf the Fourth; the difference is, that the one has good luck whilst the other had bad, *voilà tout!*"

"How can you say anything so absurd, sir?"

"I never say anything 'absurd,' and never assert anything with certainty, unless I am thoroughly acquainted with the ins and outs of the case in point," answered the gentleman in mufti,

drawing himself up very stiffly. "If the Allies, who sided with the Swedish Crown-Prince in 1813 and 1814 against the usurper, whom it still pleases you to call your Lord and Sovereign, had not left Gustaf Adolf in the lurch in 1805 and 1807, when they were *his* allies, and if they had not forsaken him and the common cause, Louis XVIII would have mounted the throne of his ancestors seven or eight years before this, I tell you, and Gustaf Adolf would still be in undisturbed possession of his legitimate inheritance."

An unusual rustle of papers in the farther corner of the diligence made the speaker turn his head in the direction whence it came, to see what was the matter; but his eyes only lighted on two young men deeply engrossed in reading, and their mentor apparently equally so in his accounts.

"It is easy to prove anything with argument," rejoined the Frenchman with irritation. "The condition and position of Europe in 1805 was not the same as in 1813, and, whichever way you take it, Gustaf Adolf the Fourth was not possessed of anything like the genius of Marshal Bernadotte."

"Luck again," replied the other in a tone of sharp rebuke. The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, we will call it even so, sir, as you do not seem disposed to admit he had genius."

"There were the same allies, the same politics, and the same end in view. Only it appears it was not yet the fullness of time appointed by Providence."

"That it certainly was *not*," assented the officer, with a faint smile; "and to ensure success in this world it is always expedient to choose the right time and weigh the conditions obtaining."

"Success depends solely upon the justice of the cause advocated. Now, that former King of Sweden from the very first chose the right way, and never for a moment deviated from it; although his treacherous allies *did* waver and leave him. And the Union of Sweden and Norway, which the Crown-Prince has achieved and which is lauded as being so much to his credit, was not his own idea, at all; his predecessors had planned it long before. Charles XII wished to annex Norway,

and so did Gustaf III, and his son likewise. When Denmark declared war in 1808 a great part of Gustaf Adolf's army was engaged to the very last minute on the western confines of Norway. If the army had not been treacherous to him and the country, but if it had done its duty and turned its arms against the enemy instead of against its lawful and legitimate King, you do not suppose that the Crown-Prince would have had the *chance* of effecting this 'famous Union,' do you? Moreover, it is not the kind of Union Gustaf Adolf IV ever contemplated; when he intended to annex Norway, it was to have been as a *Province* of Sweden, not as a separate independent kingdom."

"How can *you* tell, sir?"

"I know that as well as I know that you are sitting there opposite to me at this moment. I also know that the political value of the annexation of Norway was the same in 1808 as in 1814, although the present Crown-Prince of Sweden is on much better terms with Gustaf Adolf IV's Russian brother-in-law than *he* could afford to be, for his own and his country's sake. The great question as to whether the Crown-Prince will continue so lucky rather depends on whether the Emperor of Russia can go on making a dupe of him, and whether the former will think it the better policy in the long run to follow the Russian lead, which might enable him, with his reputed talent for finance, to establish the credit of Sweden on a sound basis, and to put a stop to the constant fluctuations in the market. If you wish to prevent the Swedes from rebelling you must let them have easy access to plenty of the 'needful.' In that land it is useless for the head of the nation to be careful with money and to honestly pay what he owes . . . quite the reverse; his saving spirit and honesty are reckoned a crime. He must be able and willing to throw money away right and left, to do himself well and to let the people live in abundance; he must be haunted by no scruples as to where the money comes from, whether it is his or theirs with which he pays, so long as in city and palace dainty viands are served, with costly dishes and rare expensive wines. They demand feasts and jousts, sleighing-parties, carnivals, and masquerades."

"I should not have thought 'masquerades' could exactly

have been classed among the pleasantest pastimes of a Swedish monarch," interrupted the officer, with a significant smile.

The man in mufti vouchsafed no reply ; his face was scarlet and his clenched hands dug hard into his knees. He had been much annoyed by the Frenchman's flippant remark ; the latter instinctively felt it, and quickly altered his tone. With the most polite accent in the world he said : " How it is, sir, that you seem so wonderfully well and intimately acquainted with Sweden and Swedish affairs ? "

" Because, for the space of seventeen years, it was my lot to be the King of that country."

The words came so suddenly and unexpectedly, and were uttered in the peculiar half-bitter, half-exultant tone in which this gentleman had spoken all the time, that it took the French officer a minute or two to recover himself, before he could rise and, with a deep bow, get out the words : " I crave your pardon, sire . . . I had no idea . . . I . . ."

" Yes, I know," answered Gustaf Adolf ; " I know you had no suspicion, nor am I in the habit of revealing my identity to strangers. I had two reasons for doing so now ; the first you shall hear at once. You stigmatised some of my views as being absurd, and you seemed to doubt my authority in making certain assertions of things which, according to your view, I had no power of judging. Now that you know who I am you will, please, remember that a person of my rank never says anything ' absurd,' and as you have learnt what I *was*, you must admit that I asserted nothing which I did not *know* to be true . . . that was one of my reasons."

" May I make so bold as to inquire what the second was ? "

No answer. Without the slightest change of expression Gustaf Adolf half turned away from the Frenchman, and with a cold and searching look surveyed the other three travellers. They had all risen to their feet when the King had so suddenly introduced himself to his companion, and the tutor stood talking eagerly, but in a very low voice, in front of his pupils. The two had resumed their seats, and their almost inaudible whispering sounded like some kind of appeal ; but their guide resolutely shook his head and, taking his big, heavy fur coat from its

peg, tried to wriggle himself into it ; but with the jolting and lurching of the coach he could not manage it, and the elder of the young men got up to lend a hand whilst the younger rolled up the papers and stuffed them into an inside pocket.

Once more the postilion blew a mighty blast, and the cracking of the whip become more frequent and loud as the ponderous yellow vehicle rolled over the bumpy, ill-paved street of a small country town, across a deserted market-square and into a lane with small white and red houses on either side, behind the windows of which aged gaffers in snowy caps and young, laughing girls with massive plaits twisted round their heads, were watching its approach with evident interest and curiosity. In honour of these spectators the whip cracked yet more often, and the horn was blown yet louder. Finally the diligence made as graceful a sweep round the corner as the very circumscribed space would allow, and drew up immediately in front of the door of the hostelry where mine host and his retinue were waiting on the steps.

The schoolmaster, who had by this time shaken himself into his coat and cap, let down the window and shouted to the landlord in German : " We think of staying here overnight. Can you give us a good-sized room with three decent beds ? "

The postilion, who had jumped down from the driver's seat, hurried to the window and asked with some perturbation : " Are you going to stay here, gentlemen ? You booked your places to Basle."

" Well . . . we are going to get out here instead," and with that the speaker clambered down the ladder the landlord was holding for him. " These young gentlemen are anxious to inspect the ruins of an ancient castle which is somewhere in this neighbourhood, early in the morning."

The landlord made his best bow. " Will the gentlemen please come along with me and choose a room for themselves ? "

The young men raised their hats to the two remaining inmates of the coach as they went their way . . . but their demeanour was not so free and easy as it had been when they first joined the coach ; they seemed rather ill at ease and a little awkward and kept their eyes fixed on the ground.

Meanwhile the two in the diligence had not exchanged a word. The French officer covertly looked at his companion, who had raised his tricorne in acknowledgment of the lady's farewell, but his cold blue eyes followed them all the way to the inn parlour.

When Gustaf Adolf again turned to the officer the sharp, searching expression had gone from his eyes, and a kind of mist had taken its place, as with a tone in which sorrow and triumph were curiously blended, he said : " Now, sir, I can tell you the second reason why I discovered myself to you, and I spoke rather loud, in order that our listening fellow-passengers might hear and understand."

" Were they listening to our conversation ? I did not notice and I did not see."

" But I saw ; I see and notice everything ; nothing escapes me."

Then in bitter, heart-breaking tones he resumed: "Now you understand, sir, what I meant when I said that if you had been a Swede you would not have spoken of your fallen sovereign with affection, reverence, or gratitude. You would . . . how did I put it just now? . . . ah, I remember . . . you would have turned your back on the setting sun and bent the knee to . . . ugh! We had better change the subject and talk about something else."

"Would you not like to go into the inn parlour and rest awhile whilst the horses are being put in?"

"No . . . no; I would rather stay where I am. It will not be long before we start again; then we can discuss common topics as we did when we were alone, as I had hoped we might have remained to our journey's end. And now, Colonel," Gustaf Adolf gently laid his hand on the Frenchman's arm, "you must humour me in *one* thing; you must forget that you know what I once *was*, and only remember what I now *am* . . . a solitary wanderer in a strange land . . . as you are too. Now we are going to be off, thank God!" And then the yellow chariot, with a rumbling like thunder and much horn and whip, once more rattled along the main country road.

CHAPTER XLV

SAD NEWS FROM SWEDEN

THERE was a little unpretentious house in the good city of Basle ; its narrow corridor led out on to a terrace and a garden sloping down to the Rhine, so that the back of the little tenement was by far the prettiest and best. This house had been bought and was inhabited by a Swedish Colonel, G. A. Gustafson by name, who meant to settle at Basle and to be naturalised as a Swiss citizen there.

The Colonel led the quietest and most simple life imaginable. The house was but scantily furnished, the kitchen utensils few, and one young maid-servant looked after it and its owner, and was housekeeper, cook, and maid rolled in one.

He seemed quite a poor man, seldom had any visitors, and if some one *did* happen to look him up before lunch, a glass of cheap wine and a few biscuits were offered him, whilst a simple cup of tea and a few slices of bread and butter were all that was set before an afternoon caller. The girl would not have been up to preparing any little delicacies, and Colonel Gustafson could not afford extra luxuries either for himself or his rare visitors . . . be it said, by the way . . . no promiscuous caller ever gained admittance ; those who came, came at his bidding. Therefore it was obvious that Herr von Muralt, who on this wintry morning was carefully ascending the three snow-covered steps leading to the front door, was expected. As he lifted the knocker the clock on the neighbouring church chimed the half-hour after ten, and Herr von Muralt made the unpleasant discovery that he had arrived a full half-hour too soon. Gustaf Adolf was ever punctual to the minute, even if

nothing more important were on the tapis than his usual game of chess ; so the visitor had to wait, and possess his soul in such patience as he could, until the hour appointed by his host came round. He had knocked several times, and now be-thought him of ringing the bell ; he was anxious to get under shelter, for it was snowing fast, and the biting north wind blew fiercely round the corner of the house which faced that quarter of the globe. At last the clattering steps of the damsel were audible from within, and the door was opened. She was a pretty girl, and the becoming and picturesque costume of her native Black Forest greatly enhanced her good looks ; she admitted the caller with a respectful " bob."

" Is the Colonel in ? " he inquired.

" He is walking about the garden somewhere. Shall I tell him you are here ? "

" Oh, no . . . not yet, I am too early ; I will go into the sitting-room and wait. You must not tell him before the clock has struck eleven."

He gave his fur coat and cap to the girl to hang up, and he gave her also a . . . smile, as she showed him into the rather spacious room, the only furniture of which consisted of an unusually long sofa, centre table, and a few chairs. Over the sofa hung a picture of Colonel Gustafson as a little boy, painted in oils.

" I suppose I had better set out the chess-board and men as usual in the next room," said the girl, " though I hardly think the Colonel will be able to pull himself together enough for a game to-day."

" Of course he will, or he would have put me off."

" There was not time for that. He only got his big letter an hour ago, when the post came in. As soon as he had read it he put on the blackest clothes he had and sat down to write ; when he had done that he went out into the garden, and has been walking about there ever since."

" What letter was it, and where did it come from ? "

" Oh, I don't know ; but it had a big, wide black border, so I could tell it was bad news. Besides, he immediately changed his clothes and put on mourning. You can see for your-

self, sir, he is just down there," she said, pointing towards a spot by the riverside.

Herr von Muralt looked through the window. The narrow walks in the garden were deep in snow and, silhouetted against the dazzling white, he could perceive a spare figure in deepest black, restlessly pacing up and down. Ever and anon it stopped, and with its hand brushed the light snow from off the hedge or a little twig of a tree as if to see whether they were still bare and naked, or whether the genial sunshine of the last few days had lured the suspicion of a tiny green bud on the dead-looking stem. But this action was so often repeated and so mechanical that it almost seemed as if the Colonel were not conscious of what he was doing, and as if his thoughts were far, far away. He continued his tramp, though the paths were deep in snow, in the little ill-kept garden from which he expected a good deal, though he had found out that it was very expensive and a great deal of trouble to keep a garden pretty and tidy, even if not much larger than a pocket-handkerchief! He went to the farther end into the little arbour which at this season looked like a veritable little Lapland snow-hut; but, as he had often told Herr von Muralt, it would be beautifully cool and shady in the summer, with a lovely view of the town and the Rhine and a delightful place for their chess when it was hot and oppressive within doors. Herr von Muralt called to mind with what simple content and satisfaction the Colonel had taken him over his diminutive estate when he took up his residence there a few months ago, and how he had especially called his attention to a rose-bed which, he said, was laid out exactly like one of those at his summer residence at Haga, near Stockholm. (The rest of the garden, in point of size and beauty, must certainly have been as *unlike* Haga as it was possible to be!)

Herr von Muralt could easily understand that that was very likely, but the unaffected natural way in which the Colonel had said it had been rather pathetic. He had become acquainted with Gustaf Adolf on his first visit to Switzerland, but then he had taken another name, in 1810, and he was touched by the "Colonel's" position, though he never could help wondering at his peculiarities.

The chess-board had now been set out in the adjoining room, and the maid had gone back to her kitchen.

Herr von Muralt stood by the window, watching the Colonel, who seemed to stop more frequently, apparently deep in thought, and unable to move from the spot. Suddenly he would start and walk round the hedge leading up to the terrace, where he would probably catch sight of his visitor at the window and be very angry at having been "spied" upon.

That thought struck Herr von Muralt, who hastily withdrew, and flung himself down on the sofa to wait patiently until the clock should strike eleven. He took his watch from his fob; it still wanted ten minutes to. He fidgeted with the hair chain and charms before he restored it to its place. It would have been rather nice, he thought, if there had been such a thing as a bookcase or a few papers handy for callers to beguile the time whilst waiting for Colonel Gustafson. . . . But there was nothing in the shape of a book visible anywhere save a huge, thick Bible which lay on the table. By its side rested a large sheet of paper, covered with Gustaf Adolf's bold, upright handwriting. Under ordinary circumstances, Herr von Muralt would never have dreamt of so much as casting a side glance even at any sort of writing left openly about, but the letters were so large and the golden sand glistened so wonderfully in the thick downstrokes, that, before he half realised what he was doing, he had skimmed the whole document, written in French, from beginning to end. It ran thus: "Sire, I have received the despatch in which Your Majesty informs me of the irreparable loss of Your adopted father, my good Uncle, King Charles XIII, and I beg to assure Your Majesty of my deep sympathy and grief.

"As Your Majesty consequently ascends the throne, I would herewith tender my congratulations and good wishes also. May Your Majesty's elevation promote the welfare of the Swedish nation. That is my most sincere wish at all times, since I know so well what are the things likely to make for the prosperity of the land which gave me birth. Recevez l'assurance de mes salutations distinguées.

"GUSTAFSON."

Herr von Muralt sat quite still ruminating for a time.

"He certainly is the most incomprehensible and eccentric being in the world," he reflected. "What other man in his position would have written like that, aye, and honestly have meant what he said, as any one who knows anything of the Colonel cannot doubt he did. If the new King really is what his partisans say, this letter is bound to make a deep impression upon him. To my mind he can answer it but in one way . . . by rescinding the imperative command (its contravention implied life-long punishment) forbidding any individual of Swedish nationality to have any communication whatsoever, either by writing or otherwise, with the deposed King, or to induce him to return to Sweden, the penalty being perpetual banishment from that country ; this command which so hurts the poor exile and upon which he looks as a gratuitous insult and a continuous and wholly unnecessary pinprick."

Herr von Muralt rose and went towards the kitchen, where the maid, with sleeves well turned up, was washing up at the sink.

"Is it eleven ? Oh, yes, I hear it striking ; so I'll just run down and tell the Colonel you are here, sir."

She pulled down her snowy sleeves and set her apron right.

"No, my good girl, you'll do nothing of the sort. You were quite right in thinking Colonel Gustafson would not feel inclined to play chess this morning ; if he should inquire about me, tell him that I will call in at the usual hour this day week, if he wishes."

"I dare not ; I *must* tell him you are here, sir. The Colonel told me once for all I was never to 'think' ; I was only to do exactly as he said. I *did* think *once*, and then I did something wrong, and he was awfully angry."

Having said that, she rushed out into the garden before Muralt had time to prevent her ; he hurried back to the parlour. Through the window he could see Colonel Gustafson at the farthest end of his little domain, and the girl dropping a curtsy, as he had instructed her always to do before addressing him or delivering a message.

The Colonel stood still and looked as if he could not quite

take in what she was saying. However, it seemed suddenly to dawn upon him, and within a few minutes he entered the room. It was not only the deep mourning which accentuated the intense pallor of the King's face, his eyes were inflamed and swollen.

"Pardon me if I have kept you waiting. The fact is, I had entirely forgotten. . . . I received information from Sweden this morning that my aged uncle, King Charles XIII, had died. The new King sent me the announcement by special messenger."

Herr von Muralt could tell by the tone in which it was said that the Colonel had been much gratified by this latter attention. In a few suitable words he expressed his sympathy.

"Thank you . . . thank you for your sympathy. I was not altogether unprepared for this catastrophe ; still, it has upset me very much. I always looked upon him as . . . as . . ." He turned away ; presently he said : "Is the chess-board set ready ? I did not send to put you off, and we will have our game . . . it may divert my thoughts a little."

Without waiting for a reply, he preceded Herr von Muralt into the adjoining room, and took his seat in front of the board, on the inlaid squares of which the chessmen, of the most delicate Chinese carving, had been duly placed. He had the initial move, and for a time they played in silence. He followed the game with forced attention. All at once he rose hurriedly, almost upsetting the table as he did so.

"You must kindly excuse me," he said ; "but I do not feel as if I could go on ; I cannot concentrate my thoughts. He was a part of my whole life, you see, the hero of my childhood's days, the guardian of my youthful years, and my friend . . . at all times. He opened the prison doors to me and mine, and now the earth has closed over the last of my line and a new dynasty. . . . Forgive me for failing you—but I cannot attend to the game properly. I must be left alone" ; saying which he accompanied his visitor to the corridor, and when the latter bowed his farewell, Gustaf Adolf added : "I shall hope to welcome you at the same hour this day week. Pardon my

not having sent you a message ; I could think of nothing but my Uncle Charles' sad death. He always meant well by me, and from my youngest days I have had so many unworthy and bad men around me." The last few words were said more to himself than to his guest. The next minute the latter was again on the snow-covered steps, and Colonel Gustafson had closed the door after him.

CHAPTER XLVI

A MYSTERIOUS RUSTIC

ONE evening a man in peasant garb, with a parcel under his arm, called at the shop of one Neeff, a general dealer in Frankfort-on-the-Main, and inquired whether the former King of Sweden were lodging in his house.

“Certainly not,” Neeff had replied in harsh tones ; and he was perfectly justified in giving that reply, for the name of the gentleman, who had been recommended by his banker and who had taken the three small rooms on the third floor, was G. A. Gustafson, Colonel in the Swedish Army, and the well-known banker who had sent him had given no intimation that he was any other than he gave himself out to be. Moreover, what he did not know Neeff the dealer considered was no business of his and did not concern him ; for which reason, too, he showed no more deference and attention to his new lodger than was absolutely required. What *did* concern Neeff, however, was that Colonel Gustafson was a most punctilious sort of a gentleman, and paid what he owed to the minute, although he was poor, as Neeff could well see, and had to be very careful about his expenses, so much so that when he arrived it had not been in his own travelling coach, nor even in the common diligence, but on a market barge, the poor man’s cheapest means of locomotion from place to place. At first Neeff had thought that the Colonel’s wish to be supplied with board and all other necessaries in the house also arose from motives of economy ; but Gustafson told him that he did not desire to frequent the hotel, where he had once been badly treated. Neeff believed him implicitly, for what sane person would ever think of doubting a word the Colonel said ? He had willingly acceded to the

request, and had never had the slightest cause to regret it. Now that his lodger had been with him for some time, Neeff found out *why* the Colonel was so exceedingly self-denying and careful . . . because more than half of his very limited income he unostentatiously gave away to the poor !

Towards his landlord the Colonel was most affable, and one of the first days of his stay he had even gone so far as to pay him a visit. Sometimes, too, he would call him up and talk to him in the most genial manner whilst walking up and down. He told Neeff that he had a great deal to do, and in truth he sat writing nearly all day long, and only went for a walk round the city in the evening.

Once more the man in rustic apparel, who had put the inopportune question about his lodger to Neeff, visited the shop. He said he had various purchases to make, and he made Neeff's young assistant take down one bale after another from the shelves and spread out their contents on the counter for inspection. At that somewhat late hour of the day but few customers came to the shop, so that the master and his assistant had plenty of leisure to attend to a country buyer. Whilst they were praising up their wares and expatiating upon the superior quality of one particular piece of cloth which the customer thought would make him a good and serviceable everyday suit, a gentleman in plain clothes, very tall and erect, with pale face and big moustache, entered the shop. The rustic stared hard at the new-comer, dropped the piece of cloth he had held in his hand, and took up the parcel he had laid down on the counter by his side.

"Good evening, landlord," said the gentleman to Neeff, who made a polite bow. "In passing the other day I saw you had got in some new supplies which I would rather like to inspect ; but whilst I think of it, be good enough just to take down that packet of woollen socks."

"Those would be much too coarse for you, Colonel. I have some which are finer and better," said the dealer.

"Be good enough to do as I ask you ; they are not for my own use, I want to give them to a poor old fellow who came

to me begging this morning ; I promised he should have a pair of socks if he would come again to-morrow . . . he wants them badly. Are those suitable for a man who has to go far to his work and in all kinds of weather ? ”

The Colonel had taken off his gloves, and was examining the quality of the socks with much apparent interest, whilst the shopman was taking down a packet containing a less coarse and rather better kind. As he and the gentleman whom he addressed as “ Colonel ” were comparing the hosiery, the countryman suddenly stepped up to the latter and said, as he removed the outer wrapper from the parcel he had brought with him and handed the packet to him : “ Will Colonel Gustafson kindly accept and read this book ? ”

He spoke eagerly, and held out a thick volume beautifully bound in calf.

“ What does this mean ? ” queried the Colonel. “ Who are you, and how do you know my name ? ”

“ You have been recognised on your walks, sir ; you are Colonel Gustafson, once . . . ”

“ What more now ? ” interrupted the Colonel angrily, and drawing himself up stiffly.

“ Of your goodness, condescend to accept this volume, and read it with attention and reflection.”

“ I accept no gifts from strangers, and I do not read books I have heard nothing about,” replied the Colonel in the same frigid, withering tone.

But the man was persistent. “ This is a book you really ought to read, sir ; it treats of and elucidates certain prophecies in the Bible which it is most important you should become acquainted with, sir.”

“ I read my own Bible, and can interpret the prophecies in that sacred Book for myself ; I have no wish to study any other explanations.”

“ But in this volume, sir, are contained Biblical prophecies, throwing a light on your own immediate future, sir,” urged the man. “ Therefore have the goodness to take it, read it, and ponder over its words. It is of the gravest import to yourself, sir . . . and other people.”

The Colonel turned crimson, but replied in his most scornful tone : " I have told you, once for all, that I take no gifts from persons I do not know, nor read books of which I know nothing. I will now add that I want no bright future foretold, and do not wish for such . . . all I want is to be permitted to live in peace and quietness, free from the intrusion of impudent and pushing strangers who want to meddle in my affairs. Good day to you."

The Colonel walked hurriedly across the shop to the door. Before opening it he turned and said to the landlord in quite a different tone : " Kindly send the two pairs of socks I chose just now up to my room, and the bill for them receipted. The bringer can wait for the money. Good night."

CHAPTER XLVII

A DINNER SERVICE AND A SWORD

THE Danish Plenipotentiary at Frankfort had been entrusted with a mission by his Sovereign, which he would find rather delicate to fulfil.

As in duty bound, he had informed King Frederick that Colonel Gustafson was at present residing in Frankfort, and this had led to orders being sent to the Count to prevent the Colonel aforementioned, in as far as was possible and could be done, without in any way compromising the Danish Minister's status, from committing any act of folly which might lower the prestige or bring discredit on the Sovereigns of Europe, to which number that very eccentric gentleman had once belonged.

This order, unpleasant and difficult in itself, was doubly so to Count von Eyben, who knew from previous experience how intolerant and impatient the deposed monarch was of any un-called for interference or meddling in his concerns. On several occasions he had had to grapple with that almost impossible "friend" of King Frederick VI's Ministers in Germany, and in his own mind he could very well understand why Gustaf Adolf had been driven from his throne . . . in the long run it would have been impossible to maintain one's loyalty to him, especially if he always were as he was just now, which Count von Eyben did not doubt, as Gustaf Adolf had been haughty, headstrong, and irritable from his cradle. Although, in the main, he was genuinely sorry for and heartily pitied the unfortunate man who had no support from anyone, no home, no friends, he considered it anything but a pleasure when, soon after receiving his master's orders, he set out for Neeff's house

to pay his respects to the Colonel. But the latter was not at home, so the Count left his card with a few lines to inform the Colonel that he was quite at his service if at any time he should wish to consult him on his personal affairs. Since then Colonel Gustafson had returned Count von Eyben's call and been introduced to his family, and the Minister had so far had no occasion to interfere. The Colonel led such a quiet, secluded life ; he troubled no one, and was thankful if no one troubled him.

Towards the end of November, however, Count von Eyben one day received a note from him, saying that he wished to talk over certain plans and projects and to have his (the Count's) advice. Would he be so good as to come to his quarters at Neeff's at five o'clock, provided it were convenient to him ; if not, would he fix some other time and let the Colonel know.

The time appointed suited the Count admirably, for if the King of Sweden had a plan, there was not a moment to lose, and all possible diplomatic craft and cunning must be employed in frustrating that plan and nipping it in the bud !

Several times the Count had called at Neeff's house and had always wondered how the man, who had once occupied a throne, could put up with the common furniture and general shabbiness around him ; but that afternoon, when he knocked at the door of the middle room of the three, which the Colonel made his study, he was surprised at the entirely different air of the apartment. The semi-genteel atmosphere had disappeared, and it looked quite respectable ; yet there was the same faded and threadbare carpet, the unsightly horsehair couch and uncomfortable chairs to match stood in their accustomed places, as did the centre table and the high desk. But the table was not bare and empty as usual ; it was covered with a white cloth, and set out upon it was the most exquisite dinner-service of choicest porcelain ; soup-tureens, dishes, bowls and plates of all sizes. On the small shelves between the windows were piled up dessert plates and dishes matching the larger set on the table, richly gilded and marvellously painted. It was this beautiful exhibition that gave such colour and radiance to the room, and accounted for its looking so unlike itself. Among the

china stood four brass candlesticks, with lighted candles, and on each shelf one.

Colonel Gustafson advanced to meet the Count, and put out his hand.

"Glad to see you, Count," he said very cordially. "What do you say to my project?" he added, pointing to the table.

"Your project, sir? I fear I do not quite take you. . . . Can this lovely dinner-service, set out here, be any sort of project or plan?"

"Yes; is it not charming? It was sent as a present to my late father, King Gustavus III, of blessed memory, by Louis XV of France, and as I do not want *it* any longer but *do* want money, I intend writing to the Elector of Hesse to ask whether he would not like to purchase it for one of his palaces, and I wanted your advice, not about writing, but about the price. . . . I am willing to take sixty Fredericksd'ors for it; it is worth a great deal more, because I happen to know that it cost over 20,000 francs, so he could not consider sixty Fredericksd'ors too dear, could he? What do you think? But before we go any further, I want you to examine the several pieces closely. Just look at that soup-tureen, that bowl and that fish-plate; what do you think of them?"

"The whole set is most beautiful and unique of its kind," Eyben said, "and not at all too dear for those who want anything of that sort. . . ."

"Don't you think that sixty Fredericksd'ors is a very moderate sum for the lot?" interrupted Gustaf Adolf in some excitement. "Well then, that is settled; thank you very much, Count, for agreeing with me."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I do *not* agree with you, altogether. The service originally cost a great deal more than the sum you are willing to take for it now, and it is valuable from an antiquarian point of view, I grant, but the old-fashioned shapes of some of the pieces would hardly commend themselves for use at the present time. . . . perhaps the plates might be. . . ."

"As the whole service is so well finished, so artistic and in such good taste, I do not suppose the shape being rather

different to what is in vogue now would be any drawback. I have always admired and used it with the greatest pleasure in times gone by."

"Naturally, it would have a much greater value for the King of Sweden than it would have for the Elector of Hesse, who has more than enough precious silver and porcelain services for all his residences," rejoined Count von Eyben.

"Take a comfortable corner on the sofa, Count, whilst I tell them to bring up tea. We can continue our discussion as we are sipping it. I am rather anxious about my plan. I shall be back in a moment."

Count von Eyben leant back in a corner and puzzled his brain as to how he could best dissuade the Colonel from making this offer, which, he was sure, would very much annoy and worry the Kurfürst of Hesse, whom he felt bound to protect from the infliction of a letter from the Colonel anent this proposal. Had he not his Sovereign's distinct instructions to look to it that none of the "Royalties" were worried by Colonel Gustafson?

The latter now came back, followed immediately by one of the daughters of the house carrying a tray with a teapot, milk-jug, sugar-bowl, and two cups of the commonest ware, and a plate heaped with home-made rusks and gingerbread. The girl remained standing with the tray until Gustaf Adolf himself had cleared a space for it on the table . . . the contrast between this tea-ware and the magnificent porcelain service among which it had found a place was appalling, not to say pathetic.

"That's all, my girl; you can go now," said the Colonel, and before sitting down he poured out tea for his guest, offered him sugar and milk, and passed the plate with the biscuits to him.

"Now we will resume our conversation. You say the Elector has more than enough of this sort of thing already, but I can tell you that I am confident he will buy this service from me, and I will tell you what leads me to that conclusion. Three years ago, when I craved his assistance for the purpose of accomplishing . . . well, *you* know . . . I mean for getting

my son to come to me"—his voice shook as he said this—"he wrote to say he regretted he could not help me in that respect, but it would give him the greatest pleasure to be of use to me in any other way. Read it for yourself; there it is as plain as a pikestaff." With that Gustaf Adolf handed him the Kurfürst's autograph letter, dated from Cassel, October, 1817.

His Excellency von Eyben could hardly repress a smile at the King's innocence and credulity. Had *he*, in the days of his power, never lightly given a promise he never meant to fulfil? It might have been so, but it was scarcely likely, and he did not seem to be able to realise that other Princes did not act as *he* would do, though that fact must have often enough been sadly brought home to him.

But the good man never *would* reckon with actualities.

The Count thought so, when the Colonel exclaimed in triumphant tones: "There now, you see it there clearly with your own eyes. I want to part with the service just now because I am in actual want of money, and I *mean* to dispose of it to the Elector for sixty Fredericksd'ors. I shall write to him about it at once, and at the same time I shall tell him that I am thinking of sending him a present by which I myself set great store; for him also it will have a certain value. I will show you what it is when you have finished your tea. I was just going to pack it up when you came. Oh, I see you have done. It is over there in that other room."

Colonel Gustafson snuffed the candle before he took it up to light his guest into the next room, which was in complete darkness.

"Mind you do not fall over the box," he said, holding up the light. "Will you please hold the candle whilst I unpack the sword?"

"Is that the sword you intend sending to the Kurfürst Wilhelm as a present?"

"It is; but it is by no means the usual kind of sword. Look here!"

He stooped down and took out of the box a huge iron sabre, very rusty, which he exhibited to the Count with much pride.

"Is it one of those swords of the old German knights?"

The shape is similar, and it must be very ancient, to judge from the rust on it."

Gustaf Adolf shook his head. "No, it is not a German sword; I brought it with me from Sweden at great expense. It is the sword always used by the Admiral-in-Chief of the Swedish Fleet, and the Swedish Kings when they were in command. Look here!"

The heavy sword was very difficult to hold steady, and when the Colonel lifted it his hands shook. As he stood in the flickering light, a tall, slender figure with a solemn expression of countenance, and the huge sword in his thin hands, Count Eyben wondered whom he was like . . . he was so puzzled trying to trace the resemblance that he could not speak, but stood staring at the man and the sword.

Suddenly it flashed upon him . . . why, Don Quixote of La Mancha, of course! He could hardly restrain an exclamation.

Gustaf Adolf stood motionless with the sword on the same spot; he was evidently far away in dreamland . . . then he affectionately gazed at the weapon till his eyes grew moist.

"I do not at all like parting with it; but I have no other gift to offer to the Kurfürst. I will send it him for the splendid collection he has at the Löwenburg at Wilhelmshöhe; he will surely be pleased to have it, as it once *did* belong to a Prince of the House of Hesse, Frederick I of Sweden."

He bent down and carefully packed the sword into its box again. That done, he said: "Now let us go back . . . sit down there and take another cup of tea with me."

But von Eyben did not respond to the invitation; he remained standing.

"How do you know, sir, that the Elector will accept this gift from you?"

"From *me*!" and the Colonel drew himself up haughtily. "Why should he not accept a gift from me, who am so nearly connected with him through his wife? What do you mean?"

"I only meant that it might perhaps be advisable to make sure first. And besides . . ."

"Well? . . . and besides? . . . If I can consent to part

with the old sword so full of memories of the past, I should think the Kurfürst of Hesse might consent to accept it."

"But have you considered, sir, whether it is quite etiquette to offer the Kurfürst a present when you, at the same time, ask him to purchase something from you for money . . . might it not look as if you wished to force him or bribe him into buying the dinner-service by sending him a present?"

"That idea never occurred to me for a moment. I made up my mind to send him the sword long before I was in such straits as now compel me to sell that service." Then he began to walk up and down in a very perturbed frame of mind.

Count von Eyben watched him narrowly. He knew by experience that the more opposition the Colonel met with the more tenaciously he would adhere to his plans . . . but sometimes, when obstacles were suggested to him and he felt it was done in a friendly way, for his advantage, it *was* possible to dissuade him from a plan one was anxious should not be carried out. Presently he stopped short.

"I will write to the Elector and tell him quite honestly how it is with my present, and the favour I would ask of him. He is a noble Prince, and I would not have him think that I cherish any *arrière pensée*. I shall tell him that I ask his help in reliance on his written word, and send the sword as a token of my regard for him."

That was just the very letter Count von Eyben intended should neither be written nor sent.

"I have a suggestion to make," he said in the straightforward manner by which he knew he would be more likely to gain his object than by beating about the bush. "Let me write to my old friend von Starekloff, Minister of War at Cassel, on both subjects. He will lay them so well before the Kurfürst and write me word; his answer I would immediately communicate to you, sir; and supposing the Kurfürst should refuse . . ."

"REFUSE? He cannot refuse; he has said clearly and distinctly, 'in any other direction I shall be pleased to help you'; and this is another direction entirely; and I am

greatly in want of money. As to my gift to him—no ; I think I would rather write myself.”

“ I beg of you not to do so, sir. At most there will be only a delay of a day or two before I can receive a reply to my letter, and I implore you to let me try the ice first. It is the usual custom among Princes. Everything is prepared and made ready, and then . . .”

“ But I would far rather write myself. I am no longer a Sovereign or a Prince, I am a private individual and a near relative of the Kurfürst’s Consort.”

“ Nevertheless, the Kurfürst *has* refused requests from you on former occasions.”

Gustaf Adolf shivered, and a mist rose before his eyes.

“ Yes, you are right ; he did refuse *then*, but he will not do so *now*.”

He took a few turns up and down, then continued : “ As you seem so determined on insisting that I should follow your advice, I begin to suspect that you have some object in view of the nature of which I am ignorant ; and as you are so fully convinced that *your* writing to your friend will be so vastly more effectual than *my* writing to the Kurfürst direct, I will consent to your doing so, but it must be done *at once*, and you must demand an answer by return.”

Having at last got his own way, the Danish Minister bowed and said : “ I will go home now directly and write to Herr von Starckloff.”

“ Do so, Count, and be good enough to bring me his answer the moment it arrives. Good night ! ”

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Count von Eyben despatched his letter to Cassel the same evening. In a humorous and slightly quizzical manner he related his conversation with Gustaf Adolf and his project of offering the French dinner-service for *sale* and the sword as a *present*. The whole letter rather advocated a refusal on the part of the Elector, if he were not otherwise disposed. But von Eyben requested Starckloff, in case the Kurfürst *should* refuse, to state the reason for the refusal in plausible terms. “ I

must let that wretched Colonel read the answer for himself, or he will not believe I have obeyed his orders, especially as he shrewdly noticed how disinclined I was. If you do not, he is quite capable of writing to the Kurfürst himself ; he is always only too ready with his pen." Thus wrote the Danish Minister to his friend at Cassel.

In as short a time as it was possible, a refusal of both Colonel Gustafson's offers arrived.

In the official note, sent as requested by Starekloff, he said : " The Elector is accustomed to the use of a silver service for dinner, and his collection of weapons at the Löwenburg is more than sufficiently supplied with ancient swords, so that he feels bound with many thanks to decline the offer of the sword, which must have infinitely more value for a Swedish Prince than it could ever have for him."

When the Count had perused the letter he immediately set forth to take it to Colonel Gustafson.

The Count rather congratulated himself ; he had succeeded in carrying out his Sovereign's instructions, delicate as they were ; he had saved the Elector of Hesse from being annoyed by the King of Sweden, and that without having any friction with the latter. In fact, everything had been so cleverly managed that if any fresh insane and foolish plan from the same quarter should threaten the peace and comfort of any reigning House in future, no doubt Count von Eyben would again be able to execute, in a like diplomatic manner, his master King Frederick VI's behests, and protect the several crowned heads from being molested by . . . here he shrugged his shoulders and smiled at the epithet he had found so fitting . . . by that poor " Don Quixote."

CHAPTER XLVIII

KIND INTENTIONS

TWO years later Colonel Gustafson was again at Frankfort, and Count von Eyben had much to report to his Government on his account.

But this time it was not Colonel Gustafson himself who was causing the Danish Envoy trouble and annoyance, it was some of his august relatives. Towards the middle of March, 1822, von Eyben received a letter from Monsieur Polier, a former tutor of Prince Gustaf's, in which he said : " The interest Your Excellency has on several occasions evinced on behalf of King Gustaf Adolf IV, and the high opinion Her Majesty the Queen entertains of you, have prompted her to seek Your Excellency's counsel and advice on a very subtle subject, but one which is of the greatest moment to her.

"The conditions under which the King appears at present to be living are a continual source of anxiety and grief to the Queen and her children. What they feel most acutely is their inability to in any way help, directly or indirectly, to ameliorate his deplorable lot in life. Without the King's being aware of it, the Queen and Prince Gustaf have certain means of being kept well informed of all that concerns him, so that in case of need they would be ready to render immediate assistance, always providing that he himself put no insurmountable obstacle in the way. From information received, they are grieved to hear that his unfortunate frame of mind, with its dire consequences, still exists, and greatly increases the sorrow of the Queen, who cannot bear to think he should be living in such impecunious circumstances, and fancy himself obliged to undergo all sorts privations and discomfort.

"After mature reflection, and much casting about for what means she could employ to mitigate his distress, it struck her that it might be possible to give him a yearly pension in the name of the King of Denmark, in consideration of their kinship. This, sir, is the gist of the problem upon which the Queen desires to have your opinion. It is of the greatest importance to her to know how *you* think this scheme might be worked, as matters now stand.

"In case you thought the plan a feasible one, the Queen—without in any way causing Your Excellency to be compromised—would address a request to the Queen of Denmark to obtain the consent of the King to *your* being empowered to offer King Gustaf Adolf a yearly sum for life, which sum the Queen and Prince Gustaf would (in the King of Denmark's name) immediately place at your disposal. Her Majesty is fully aware of the magnitude of the favour she is soliciting from the King of Denmark, and the immense obligation under which she would be to Your Excellency, and begs me to express her high appreciation and gratitude.

"The fact of the Queen's and Prince Gustaf's addressing themselves to Your Excellency in this sad and painful state of affairs, will be sufficient proof of the confidence they place in Your Excellency's judgment and honourable feeling . . . they have graciously deputed me to lay their desire before you. With all due deference and respect, I have the honour to sign myself yours, etc. etc.

"POLIER-VERNAUD."

After much reflection and weighing of pros and cons, von Eyben answered on his own responsibility :

"I am greatly touched by the trust and confidence with which Her Majesty the Queen has condescended to honour me, through the medium of your pen. I would ask you to convey to her my unbounded and most humble respects and appreciation. I can say, sir, Her Majesty has judged rightly that I am penetrated with a lively desire to further, by every means in my power, the plan formed in her generous and noble heart, and that of Prince Gustaf, whose filial affection is well known and universally acknowledged.

“ I think I can find no better way of demonstrating to Her Majesty that I am not unworthy of her confidence, than by openly discussing with yourself, sir, the ways and means which, in my humble opinion, would contribute best to the accomplishment of her wish, and leave to your own discretion what use to make of my letter. To begin with, I should state that I have been fortunate enough, at odd times, by the express wish of my Sovereign Lord, who, having been reluctantly compelled to decline certain advances and proposals of King Gustaf's, was doubly anxious that I should seize every opportunity of being of use to him, and in case of need supplement his wants. For several years I had the gratification of being honoured by King Gustaf's confidence . . . I have reason to fear, however, that that is no longer so now . . . for what cause I know not ; for although he wrote me a most gracious letter at the end of last October, I have not had the honour of seeing him since, though a month ago, when he was suffering from a slight indisposition, I offered him my services and tried to regain his favour.

“ I therefore came to the conclusion that he no longer wished to have anything to do with Denmark or to accept anything from that country, as he had long ago told me (more than once) that he could manage to live very well on very little, but that in the long run he could not exist without some sort of occupation, and that he would be glad to have a regular post either as General on the Staff or as Governor of a Fort, with the usual pay attached thereto. I mentioned this to Baron d'Anstett at the time, who said that His Majesty the Emperor Alexander had instructed him to do his best, as he (the Emperor himself) was debarred from personally making any such appointment. You will gather from this, sir, that your own conclusions are correct, and that it is King Gustaf himself who puts so many difficulties in the way that his august relatives, who are so ready and willing to assist him, find it quite impossible to do so.

“ The question now is how to remove these difficulties. May I be permitted to make a suggestion ?

“ For the moment the King is not actually in want, and judging by what he has told me, I should say his capital would certainly be sufficient for some years to come . . . but it is the

interest (I cannot precisely say to what it amounts) which is not by a long way adequate to his expenses, and he does deprive himself of many things for fear his funds should come to an end. A remedy must be found so that his income may keep pace with his expenditure ; but so far as I know, it would be a work of extreme difficulty to persuade him into accepting a lump sum to be added to his capital, or a certain fixed amount per annum. Still, if he *is* to be helped the attempt must be made. One way to succeed would doubtless be that suggested by yourself, sir, and though His Majesty, King Frederick, cannot come forward personally, he would gladly lend any help he could towards it. Therefore I am quite prepared to offer King Gustaf a fixed annuity in *his* name, and shall make the offer in terms calculated to evoke consent . . . at the same time I must admit, sir, that I have grave doubts as to whether King Gustaf will accept it. I must also first have the *official* sanction of my Sovereign, though I am quite sure that it is his greatest desire to improve the future prospects of his relative. I also thought I ought to communicate with Baron d'Anstett with regard to the Emperor Alexander's kindness. These considerations have induced me to represent to Her Majesty the Queen that it might, perhaps be more practicable if, instead of writing to the Queen of Denmark, she would permit *me* to lay the subject before King Frederick.

“ But before in any way mentioning the matter to the Court at Copenhagen, I will await Her Majesty's decision. Should she fall in with my proposal, I would very humbly inquire what the sum would be she would wish to be offered to King Gustaf, and I would crave permission to add that he, who rather takes pleasure in depriving himself of certain comforts, would probably refuse help altogether if supplied with the generous amount the Queen would, no doubt, wish to settle upon him. I call attention to this little peculiarity of his, as I much fear too great liberality might defeat its own ends.

“ If, however, this plan should not prove successful with King Gustaf, and I am not over sanguine that it will, I have yet one other proposal to make. Last year he requested His Royal Highness the Duke of Oldenburg to give him some post

or other in the Castle of Eutin, and to let him have rooms there in connection with it. I did not in any wise discourage the idea, but begged him not to risk a refusal by direct application to the Duke, but to let me see first how the land lay. This he would not do, and I never heard whether, directly or indirectly, any application had been made by him; but in pursuance of that plan, I think it might be possible to persuade Gustaf Adolf to accept an annuity from the Duke and a residence at Eutin if such were offered. But all that would have to be arranged with the *Duke*.

“Should this suggestion be approved by Her Majesty the Queen, I shall wait to know her decision, and whether she would like to write to the Duke with her own hand, or would honour me with her commands. In the latter case I would ask that a formal letter might be addressed to me which I could submit to the Duke.

“Another way to help King Gustaf, without rousing any suspicion, would be to add a lump sum to his capital under pretence that the Banker, with whom he placed (and lost) his money, when he went to Greece, and who failed, was now beginning to pay off his liabilities. But in order not to fail in this mission nor to awake any misgivings on the King's part, it would be necessary to collect the minutest details in connection with the failure of the Bank and to act accordingly. Unfortunately, I have so far not been able to ascertain even the name of the Banker nor the amount of the sum lost, but it could not have been much under 24,000 florins. If you could gather any thoroughly reliable information, I fancy this would be the easiest way of all for carrying out the Queen's wishes. If you are not able to obtain details, the plan can still be carried through (if it meet with the Queen's approval) with the help of the Danish Consul at Trieste. In that case I should ask *him* to write to *me* and say that a man, whom he did not know, had called upon him, and had left such and such a sum of money with a request that it might be forwarded to King Gustaf, to whom he owed it; also that he wished the King to be informed that as soon as he was able, he would refund the rest with the interest due added. The Consul will officially

inform me of that fact, ask for the King's present address, and conclude with an intimation that he will await further instructions from me.

"Here, then, sir, you have all the suggestions I can make for the fulfilment of Her Majesty the Queen's generous intentions. Kindly think over and analyse them and lay them before Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Gustaf."

The reply to this letter was as follows :

"I hastened to lay the letter with which Your Excellency was pleased to favour me before Her Majesty, and regret to say that a slight temporary indisposition prevented my expressing my thanks or sending Her Majesty's orders ere this.

"The Queen has commissioned me to say how greatly she appreciated the manner in which you have taken up her cause and justified her confidence in Your Excellency. She is convinced that she will only have to thank your cleverness and perspicacity if the plan she has so much at heart is successful. Its speedy consummation is most essential to her peace of mind.

"Having carefully studied the different projects conveyed in your letter, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Gustaf almost think that the idea of the King's settling at Eutin presents the greatest advantages and the fewest difficulties in its accomplishment, having been the King's own wish at one time. The noble offer of His Royal Highness, the Duke, raises the hope that he may be inclined to consider the circumstances from the Queen's point of view. In the very improbable event that this plan should meet with hindrances, it will always remain to apply to the Consul at Trieste to effect the very ingenious plot Your Excellency has so cleverly thought out in reference to the Banker in Venice, and which Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Gustaf were at first much inclined to adopt as being the most simple and easy to carry out . . . on second thoughts, they feared the King *might* have his suspicions and, following out one of his unfortunate *idées fixes*, might wish to withdraw all the 'capital' for investment somewhere else, and so would discover all.

"Her Majesty has given me permission to send you this semi-official note, and prays you will make what use of it most commends itself to you, with regard to His Royal Highness the Duke of Oldenburg. If Her Majesty and Prince Gustaf were at liberty to follow the generous impulse of their hearts in this matter, they would name a sum in accordance with their position—but referring to Your Excellency's very just views on the subject, I have at last succeeded in bringing the amount down to one thousand louisd'ors per annum (11,000 florins), which will be handed over to Your Excellency to invest and distribute as you may judge best.

"Neither the Queen nor Prince Gustaf have the least doubt of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander of Russia's kindly feelings; but as he is such a near neighbour, and for other reasons, they wish their purpose kept a profound secret, and are happy to be assured that Your Excellency will respect their wish."

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However, Count von Eyben was, of course, in duty bound to report these transactions to the Court at Copenhagen.

When the comment made upon them there reached him, he was exceedingly vexed and annoyed; not only was he altogether prevented from being of any use to the Queen, as he had intended, but the reply was couched in such terms as implied a distinct snub from his Government . . . and no accredited Minister, least of all a man of Count von Eyben's temperament, could be supposed to take a snub with equanimity.

The head of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Rosenkrantz, wrote :

"I have submitted to the King the letter (dated the fourth of this month) with which Your Excellency honoured me, as well as the copy of the correspondence between yourself and Baron Polier, respecting the assistance Queen Frederica desires to give to the deposed King of Sweden.

"By command of His Majesty I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that *He* will *not* lend his name, nor is he disposed to be made the channel through which that King, his

cousin, shall receive the help Queen Frederica wishes him to have. His Majesty also desires that you should not in any way whatever take upon yourself to influence the Duke of Oldenburg to allow the afore-mentioned Prince, his cousin, to take up his residence at Eutin. For reasons which His Majesty is bound to take into consideration, he does not desire his cousin's presence in Holstein, as it might give a wrong impression and rouse unwarranted suspicions in the mind of the present Sovereign of Sweden, and this His Majesty is most anxious to avoid.

“His Majesty wishes it to be distinctly understood that, much as he regrets the unfortunate position of his cousin, he cannot see it from the Queen's point of view, nor can he consent to any of the propositions made to Your Excellency by Her Majesty.”

CHAPTER XLIX

A VISION

QUEEN FREDERICA lay sick unto death at "Villamont" in Lausanne. She was suffering from hydro-pneumonia, and had left Baden at the end of July *en route* for Nice, to seek relief for her hopeless complaint in the genial climate of the sunny South. She had travelled by way of Switzerland in order that she might consult the celebrated specialist, Doctor Butiny, at Geneva. Now she was at Lausanne she could not proceed further on account of increasing weakness. Her son and her two youngest daughters were with her. The eldest, Princess Sophia, who had now been married seven years to the Margrave Leopold of Baden, had been unable to come, as she was looking forward to an interesting family event shortly.

Queen Frederica was dangerously ill, and none of her people entertained the faintest hope of her recovery, though in the intervals between her terrible fits of suffocation, she herself sometimes thought that if she could only soon get on to Nice, the mild air there might restore her to health. She courageously tried to bear up. When she was able she would either sit by the open window and enjoy the lovely view, or she would be taken out into the garden, where, resting on a couch in the verandah, she would inhale the fragrant scent of the flowers with panting breath. She was always more calm and hopeful when she did not feel that her illness was depressing **those about** her, and *they* buoyed her up and did not try to from joining them and appearing in the dra hour of tea, though often it took all her strength to sufficiently together.

When she was unable to do this, she insisted upon tea being served as usual, and she would have the door to her room set open so that, from her bed, she might see her children and her two sisters, the widowed Queen of Bavaria and the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Hesse, as they sat round the tea-table, on which old silver and exquisite Sèvres porcelain were set out, by the huge glass doors opening on to the garden. When Queen Frederica beheld her dear ones cheerfully chatting, she felt that she still had some hold on life, and that she would surely, ere long, be able to continue her journey . . . away from pain . . . away from Death.

Now and then one of her young daughters would come to the door and give her a cheery nod and a smile, or one of her sisters would come and sit by her side and tell her how much better she was looking, though in reality, as she lay there with eyes closed, they thought no one would have known she was still alive, had it not been for the painful heaving of her chest and the struggle for breath. The prospect of losing her was a great grief to them; during the last twelve months, the "Reaper whose name is Death" had been sadly busy in the House of Baden. After the death of the Queen's only brother, the Grand Duke Carl, eight years ago, one after another had been taken. First her sister, Princess Amelia, then the King of Bavaria and the Emperor Alexander, and in the spring of this year (1826) the Empress Elisabeth, and now poor Queen Frederica herself was lying on her deathbed.

The Hereditary Grand Duchess was obliged to leave Lausanne on September 2nd; she did so without saying "good-bye" to the Queen, as it was feared the excitement might be too much for her; she grew so much worse a few days later that every moment was expected to be her last. However, she rallied most marvellously, even from this last attack, and had the great joy of hearing that her daughter, the Margravine Sophia, had been safely delivered of a son on September 9th.

These glad tidings seemed to keep the august invalid up for a few days, and September 17th being a most beautiful day, she thought she would like a little fresh air, and that a drive

in the small, low victoria would certainly not hurt her ; she much preferred that little low carriage to a larger one.

Dressing was a dreadful ordeal, though she only had a light grey cloak lined with ermine, loosely buttoned over her white dressing-gown. She could not be worried to put on a bonnet, so a fine white lace wrap was put round her head ; but even this small attempt at dressing had quite exhausted her strength ; and she had to sit down and rest for a while before she could totter to the carriage on the doctor's arm. Her Lady-in-Waiting held a parasol over her head to shade her from the sun. She was very white, and her beautiful deep-set eyes were half closed ; she only opened them once, and her lips moved as if she were speaking, but the words were inaudible even to the doctor on whose arm she leant.

As usual, a crowd had gathered to see her start, and as some of them were exceedingly obtrusive, Doctor Perret sent a lackey to request the good folk not to molest the sick lady. A simply attired, middle-aged man had also stood there, but some way off, and *he* was among the first to beat a hasty retreat when the crowd was ordered to disperse. This individual had particularly attracted the lackey's attention, and when Her Majesty, more dead than alive, returned after barely half an hour's drive, which Doctor Perret pronounced to have been most trying and would certainly be her last, the lackey said to the Queen's waiting-maid : " I wonder whether our august lady recognised the man who was waiting for her as she came down the stairs ? He was as white as she herself, and he stared at her as if he had been bewitched, and when he went away he turned round three times and . . . "

" Good heavens ! was that perhaps Death ? "

" No, it was not Death himself, but it almost might have been. Long as I have been in Her Majesty's service, I never saw *him* anywhere near her before. But I *have* seen him both at Basle and at Leipzig, and having once set eyes on the man, it is impossible to forget him."

" Then was it . . . ? "

" Yes, it *was* ; and as you said, the Queen knew when he was at the inn at Karlsruhe this year whilst changing horses, and

that he went on his journey without ever inquiring after her or her children, and that she felt it most keenly. I was just wondering whether she had seen and recognised him to-day, and what her thoughts were."

That no one was ever destined to find out . . . eight days after that last drive, on the evening of September 25th, 1826, Queen Frederica passed away.

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A night early in October, dark as pitch, and the vast number of torches scarcely sufficed to cast a weird light on the broad high-road leading from Karlsruhe to Pforzheim, as Queen Frederica's funeral cortège moved slowly along. There had been a memorial service at the Palace at Karlsruhe at eleven o'clock that evening (October 10th), immediately after which the procession, amid tolling of bells, had started to convey her mortal remains to their last resting-place in the family vault in the Chapel Royal at Pforzheim.

It was an imposing spectacle. Two mounted torch-bearers rode on in front, then came a detachment of cavalry in white uniforms, mounted on black chargers; in the dark night, with the red, lurid glare of the torches upon them, they looked ghost-like indeed. There were six mourning coaches drawn by six horses each, and in front of each rode two torch-bearers, whilst footmen walked on either side. In the first carriage, preceding the hearse, were the Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household, Freiherr von Edellheim in charge of the Royal Crown, with him Herr von Munck in charge of the late Queen's Order of Saint Catherine. The chief mourners, the son of the deceased lady, Prince Gustaf and her son-in-law the Margrave Leopold of Baden, were in another coach, and immediately behind followed the hearse, drawn by eight horses and escorted by the cavalry Officer in Command and by the Grand Duke's Master of the Horse. On either side of the hearse walked four torch-bearers, whose torches, lifted very high, cast a dull flickering light on the coffin and the hearse richly draped in black and silver. The rear was brought up by another detachment of men in white uniforms on black horses. Benighted travellers, who met the

weird cortège on the way, halted until it had passed, and then found it difficult to compose themselves to comfortable sleep again. The almost noiseless riders in front of and behind the hearse, the black-garbed torch-bearers, the large, heavy hearse, the horses with their black swaying plumes, and the mourning-coaches with their gloomy decorations, in the darkness of the night, made a most solemn picture, and one which could not but make a deep impression on all who saw it.

Silence reigned in the coaches. Prince Gustaf and the Margrave had not exchanged a word for hours. The former leant back in a corner with his eyes closed, and his companion fancied he was asleep . . . but Prince Gustaf slept not ; he was only thinking, and as he now followed his mother to the grave, his thoughts were of her and the days of his childhood, and of *him* who *should* have been sitting on his right as *chief* mourner.

The Margrave Leopold did not sleep either ; he thought he had seen a *ghost* or a *vision*. He had sat leaning forward, and peered out of the coach window as they drove through the arched city gates of Pforzheim. The archway was only feebly lighted by a couple of lanterns, but the light of the torches had, for a moment, fallen upon the face of the man who stood there bareheaded and with clasped hands, following the hearse with earnest, hungry eyes.

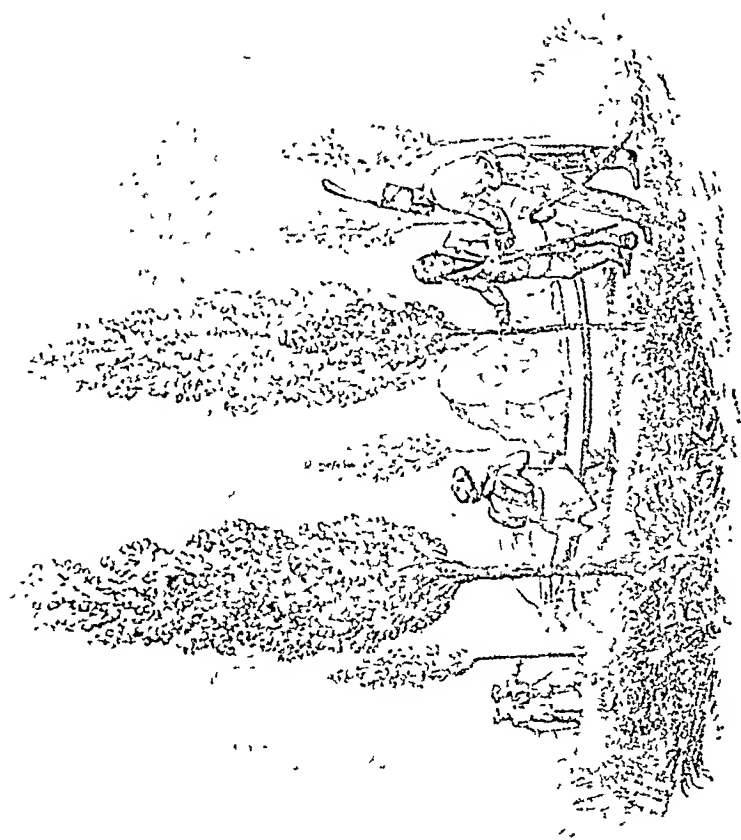
The Margrave thought he recognised in that figure the man who had been occupying Prince Gustaf's thoughts, and who *should* have had the seat of honour in that coach with his son and son-in-law . . . or had it merely been an illusion called up by want of sleep and the uncanny darkness of the night ? . . .

CHAPTER L

A MEMORIAL STONE

THE old pensioner who acted as keeper of the "Schwedenstein" (Swedish memorial stone) had been somewhat perplexed by the appearance of a gentleman who on three consecutive Tuesdays in the spring of 1828 had come and wandered, apparently lost in thought, under the poplar trees which had been planted round a very ordinary-looking block of grey stone, bearing the initials "G. A." and the date "1682." The stone had been placed there in memory of the great Swedish King Gustaf Adolf II, the deliverer of Germany, on the spot on which he had fallen. Now the "Keeper" had just found out that the mysterious visitor had once borne the same name and title as the hero to whose memory the stone had been raised, and for whom he (the Keeper) very properly cherished a great admiration and respect, since it was all owing to the Swedish monarch, who had been dead now nearly two hundred years, that *he* had free board and lodging, one hundred Prussian thalers per annum, and four loads of wood, which acceptable emoluments he calmly enjoyed in return for the not very arduous labour of keeping guard over the "Swedish Stone."

The stranger had excited the pensioner's interest and curiosity on the very first Tuesday of his visit to the Stone. He had seemed so overcome at sight of it that he had been obliged to turn away in order to conceal his emotion, and when the "Keeper" had addressed him and said: "I presume you are a Swede, sir," he had waved him away and not vouchsafed any reply. From a distance, however, the old man (as he was in duty bound) had kept a keen eye on the stranger, who had removed his hat, and with head bent low and hands clasped



had seemed to be performing his devotions in front of the Stone. The golden rays of the setting sun had shone upon that uncovered head and the spare, attenuated figure in the threadbare blue coat tightly buttoned to the chin. The man's head was bald save for a fringe of fair hair on the sides and at the back ; he had a short moustache of like colour with the hair ; his age might be about fifty—probably more. He had remained quite a long time gazing at the Stone, then without uttering a word he had walked away in the direction of Leipzig.

When he reappeared on the following Tuesday the Pensioner immediately recognised him, and was much exercised in his mind as to who the stranger could possibly be. Again he engaged in respectful homage to the monument, after which he seemed most minutely to study a map he had brought with him. For some time he had been surveying the surrounding country with his field-glasses, and then looked down at his plan to verify and locate what he had seen, making various notes in pencil on the margin. He gave the impression of a man who evidently knew what he was about. But he never spoke to the Keeper on that Tuesday either, and had disappeared, like lightning, along the same road (to Leipzig) on the arrival of some Swedish tourists, who informed the old man of their nationality and requested him to point out to them the precise spot where Piccolomini's men had stood when the Austrian Corporal, pointing to the King of Sweden, had cried : "*He* must be some great man ; fire at *him*, lads !"

The following Tuesday evening the stranger had come for the third time, and after his usual military salute to the Keeper, he had again gone to the Monument and walked up and down abstractedly under the lofty poplars. Again he had appeared extremely agitated and unable to tear himself away from the place. When he thought himself free from observation, he had slowly and caressingly passed his thin white hand along the surface of the Stone, and his lips had moved in unspoken words. Then he had taken a well-worn note-book from his breast-pocket and made a sketch of it, its inscription and the date.

Not that there was anything peculiar in that ; many visitors had done that before . . . no ; what *was* peculiar was that

this man seemed rooted to the spot and incapable of leaving it. He either stood in front of it in one place, lifting first one foot then the other . . . continually *marching* yet never *moving*, or sauntered to and fro under the poplars !

On this occasion the Pensioner, as usual, was watching him from a distance, when to his surprise the stranger came forward and addressed him in the purest German.

“ That stone,” he said, “ is much too shabby a monument in honour of such a great King. He is worthy of a far handsomer one, and as the Germans seem so ungrateful to his memory, I myself will see that he has a more fitting memorial ; it shall be raised in 1836, when the millennium is timed to begin.”

Before the amazed Pensioner had time to say anything in answer or to ask for an explanation of the stranger’s mysterious and mystifying utterances, behold he had vanished ! The old man rather looked forward to seeing him again on the next Tuesday . . . but the mysterious visitor came no more . . . neither on the following nor any other Tuesday.

CHAPTER LI

FAMILIAR MELODIES

AT the "Golden Lion" at Aix-la-Chapelle a rather notable visitor had lodged himself about this time. Feldt, the "Imperial Russian Court Violinist," had come to take the warm baths in that city, and lovers of music and musicians lived in high expectation of hearing that vaunted performer play at some grand concert or gathering during his stay.

But those who rejoiced most at his arrival were, doubtless, the chosen few lovers of melody, who for nearly thirty years had been in the habit of hiring one of the large rooms at the "Golden Lion," and who had spent many a delightful evening in making sweet music together. Such a social evening had been arranged to take place the day after the great artist's arrival, and some of the members of the "Musical Society" conceived the audacious idea of inviting HIM, the Court Violinist, to take part in their gathering! To their great astonishment and delight, that famous man not only very willingly accepted the invitation, but himself offered to play first violin in a quartette of Mozart's which the Society had been practising. Nothing could exceed the exultation and excitement of the members at the prospect of hearing this wonderful virtuoso perform on his beautiful instrument, in such a select and appreciative circle, and when Feldt entered the room with his violin under his arm and advanced to the place reserved for him among the amateurs, he could read in the ecstatic expression of their faces their gratitude and gratification at being privileged to play in the company of such a distinguished musician.

The room was large, but not particularly well lighted. Some

wax candles burned in sconces on the walls, a few in a lustre hanging from the ceiling, and just one or two on the music-stands, and Feldt only perceived that the room was packed with listeners when he stepped forward to thank his colleagues for their enthusiastic welcome and the beautiful wreaths twined round his stand. An old man, with a green shade over his eyes, who rose with difficulty from his chair, was spokesman, and expressed a warm welcome to the visitor in the name of the active and passive members of the musical Fraternity. The passive members sat on stools against the wall; they were mostly old men who in their time had been active members and whom the infirmities of age had compelled to relinquish the *active* part, but who never missed a musical evening, and who were strongly represented on this particular occasion. Fifteen or twenty pairs of crippled old hands heartily applauded their spokesman's little speech. Then there was deep silence throughout the room. The elder among the performers drew forth from their breeches' pockets gold or silver snuff-boxes and, holding a pinch of snuff between finger and thumb, listened with beatified rapture on their faces to the preliminary tuning of the instruments in eager anticipation of the treat in store for them—it was a crucial moment when the tuning began!

The first chords of the “Allegro”! Surely such bowing (*bo-ing*), such melting tones were beyond what could have been expected, even from such a master musician. The old men forgot to take their snuff; they dared hardly stir for fear of losing one single note of those exquisite strains.

The usual orchestra, too, played as it had never been known to play before . . . uplifted, no doubt, by the brilliant performance of the first violin. The aged listeners closed their eyes beneath the green shades. On waves of heavenly harmony they had been borne from age and loneliness to Elysian fields of renewed youth and bliss!

When the last chords had died away, the applause sounded but feeble—the aged could not clap, they had been so rudely recalled to the world of stern realities before they could grasp it—and when the kind-hearted violinist rose and offered,

without having been asked or pressed, to play Master Bach's "Ciaccona" to them, they could only cry with one heart and voice : " God bless you, sir, God bless you ! "

There was a wholesome whiff of pine and freshness from the newly scoured floor, strewn with fragrant tips of fir (an old Swedish custom), and the last red rays of sunset shining through the torn curtains helped to light up the walls, papered with representations of hunting scenes, bold knights in ponderous armour, beautiful maidens on milk-white steeds with falcons on their wrists, pretty pages in their train, and packs of hounds and fleeing deer among lofty trees and tangled brushwood.

And Feldt, the glorious Feldt, was playing Bach's "Ciaccona," and once more the music-lovers were lifted far above their poverty-stricken surroundings into a world of supremest delight. The player himself felt, as he often did, as if he were only the instrument, and some other man the player, and he, too, listened to the tones as to some Divine inspiration—if it were indeed himself who was guiding the bow, he had at this hour surpassed himself. He felt that the tones which cooed and sang from his violin had power to draw all creatures living unto them . . . he wondered who would be the first to feel their magnetism.

The door of the room opened noiselessly and a tall, dark shadow stood motionless on the threshold. So quiet and ghostlike had been its entrance that it had disturbed neither the player nor his heavenly playing ; in fact, he was not sure whether the intruder were real flesh and blood or only a vision of his imagination—probably the latter, as no one else had seemed to notice him. Only when the last sound was dying away and the black-robed figure advanced two or three steps farther into the room did Feldt begin to wonder who the late-comer might be and why his tardy appearance, hitherto unnoticed, should make such a commotion among the audience, who rose and respectfully greeted the stranger, who was not what might be called an *old* man, though he might be a little past middle age ; he was tall and well grown and garbed in black from head to foot. His features were grave and solemn.

his bearing noble ; yet there was something so peculiar and striking about the *tout ensemble* that he must have attracted attention wherever he was. His refined carriage and his haughty expression of countenance gave an unmistakable impression that he was oppressed by some heavy burden and weighed down by some great secret sorrow which would brook neither sympathy nor consolation.

The new-comer walked up to the old man who acted as spokesman and courteously apologised for his intrusion.

“ I am occupying the adjoining room and have, therefore, already greatly enjoyed your meeting, but I did not wish any longer to do so without your knowledge and consent. May I be allowed further participation in the enjoyment of the music in your midst ? ” he said.

“ We shall be highly honoured,” replied the man, bowing and offering the easy chair in which he had been sitting, but which was politely declined.

“ That is *your* place, sir, not *mine*,” said the stranger, fetching a stool, on which he seated himself in a far corner of the room.

“ Who is that stranger ? ” whispered Feldt to the man sitting next to him.

“ That is the dethroned King of Sweden, Gustaf Adolf IV, who is living here at present under the assumed name of “ Colonel Gustafson.”

“ Is it possible ! How times change ! In 1796, the year the Empress Catherine died, I saw him at the Russian Court when he was wooing the Grand Duchess Alexandra. We had to get up quite a number of Swedish airs in his honour. I should never have recognised him—well, that *was* more than thirty years ago ! But we ought not to whisper, he is looking this way . . . ”

“ I trust I am not disturbing your meeting ; if so, I will take myself off at once,” said a voice at the lower end of the room ; it was *meant* to be gentle and courteous, but it sounded vexed and impatient. “ Will you go on with your delightful playing, or am I, perhaps, *de trop* ? I had hoped that *one* music-lover more would make no difference to you, gentlemen, but if it does, I . . . ”

Gustaf Adolf hurriedly rose from his seat and made as though about to leave the room.

But Feldt, who had been turning over some sheets of music, called out eagerly : " Pray, pray do not go ; I am just going to play two or three little things which may interest you."

Gustaf Adolf at once sat down again and waited. He looked neither to right nor left, but fixed his eyes on the paper in front of him, with the knights and damoizelles, the falcons and hounds chasing the wild boar into the woods.

The violinist had given up turning over the pile of music in search of something which evidently was not there, and sat wondering for a time what he could play—for now he wanted his music to be solely and entirely for the solitary, lonely man in black, who had been drawn into that room full of strangers by the sound of his violin ; he wanted to give him something good for having come in so kindly and affably at the bidding of his muse.

" It is the same King of Sweden for whom we had to play dance-music once at the Hermitage Palace two-and-thirty years ago," he reflected.

Beginning very softly, but with full, clear tones, Feldt struck up the Empress Catherine's favourite minuet, the same to the strains of which the then youthful King of Sweden had danced first with the Grand Duchess Elisabeth, afterwards Empress of Russia, and then with his own bride-to-be, the Grand Duchess Alexandra Pawlowna, on his first introduction at the Hermitage. It was this minuet which Feldt played for the lonely man sitting apart in the corner of that spacious room at the inn.

Gustaf Adolf started visibly as his ear first caught the air of the minuet. He felt that those strains were addressed only to him, and he wondered absently why. It was a minuet he knew, but could not make out which. In his childhood and during the lifetime of his father, of blessed memory, he had heard so much music and had joined in so many minuets, which particular one could it be the Russian Maestro was now playing with such exquisite skill ? It was, in truth, a charming melody, and Gustaf Adolf listened to it entranced. When he closed his eyes in order to hear better, there passed before his

mind a vision of a resplendent ball-room, lighted with hundreds of wax tapers. He was no longer a lodger in a common inn—he was the young King in his Court dress of black and red, leading his white-robed bride forth to the dance . . . but which bride? He put his hand to his forehead trying to remember. He knew every note of the music to which he was listening. Many a time had he danced to that stirring melody in past memorable days . . . but had it been at the Tauris Palace or in the great hall in the Palace at Stockholm? The minuet grew slower and slower and died away in a few gentle sounds—then a fresh, even more familiar air burst upon his ear. A proud, hearty strain, a song with the words of which Gustaf Adolf was well acquainted; he had heard them times out of number; they had been written by the late King and the poet Kellgren, set to music by Naumann and introduced into the Opera “Gustaf Wasa.”

“Ädla skuggor, vördade Fäder,
Sveriges Hjältar och Riddarsmän!
Om annu dess sällhet er gläder,
Gifven friheten lif igen.
Skola edra helgade grafvar
Trampas af Tyranner och Släfvar?”

Nej, må trälldomens blotta namn
Edra vreda vålnader väcka,
Och er arm sig hämnande sträcka
Ur den eviga nattens famn!”

“Noble shades and honoured kinsmen,
Sweden’s Knights and Heroes bold,
Who rejoice at having given
Back her freedom as of old.
Shall the Tyrant or the vanquished
Trample on your sacred dust?”

Nay, the very name of Tyrant
Shall your righteous wrath awake,
And from out eternal darkness
Reaching forth, ye’ll vengeance take!”

Gustaf Adolf well remembered hearing these words for the first time. The King himself had recited the grand stanzas to his little son with flashing eyes, and had promised that he should hear them sung at the Grand Theatre by the great tenor Stenborg at the next performance of that Opera.

He put his hand over his eyes and listened with all his soul to the stirring melody, and even more stirring words, meant for *his* ear only. He seemed to see the Grand Opera House at Stockholm; he saw the late King in the foyer, the whole Court in gala-dress; he could see them all as they used to sit, ladies and gentlemen . . . Armfelt here . . . Essen there, and Wachtmeister. There Countess Höpken, here Fröken Rudens-

köld, and behind his own chair his old friend and tutor, Rosenstein. . . . And how his heart had thumped within him when Stenborg had begun to sing !

In view of that evening's performance Rosenstein had told his young pupil much about his worthy ancestors, the knights and heroes of Swedish history . . . he had spoken of Engelbrecht, of the Stures, of Gustaf Wasa and Gustaf Adolf, of Charles XII and of his own father, and had expressed a hope that future generations would one day place *him* (Gustaf Adolf) in the ranks with these knights and heroes too. . . .

It had been these words of Rosenstein's that had made his heart beat so fast. As he remembered how often afterwards he had been obliged to listen to that song in the place where his father had been murdered, he put his handkerchief to his eyes. Never since that fatal hour had he been able to think of these noble "shades" ; they were blurred by the bleeding body of his adored father.

The notes rose and fell, then suddenly ceased—but Gustaf Adolf felt that the foreign Maestro intended to play something more for *him*, and he waited anxiously for what would come next. A few runs and preludes offered no clue ; the excitement threatened to be almost too much for him. He longed for some other old, familiar air, yet dreaded to hear it, lest he should be unable to control his feelings if the musician should happen to touch a tender chord within his breast. The suspense was the worst to bear ; his hands trembled and his lips twitched.

Then Feldt played the first bars of " I saw a wingéd butterfly at Haga " (" Fjäriln vingad syns på Haga "). As soon as he recognised the air, Gustaf Adolf wondered why Feldt should have chosen just *that one now*. Suddenly it dawned upon him that the violinist must have heard it at St. Petersburg, where the Empress Catherine had often made her orchestra play it to " catch the Count of Haga." Many a time, when he and the Grand Duchess Alexandra had been anywhere near the bandstand, the Empress had cried to the band : " Strike up Haga."

And now he heard it again. Few would have guessed how that one air affected him. Scenes at Haga unrolled themselves

before him ; he knew no words which so adequately described the beauties of his beloved Haga.

Feldt was playing variations on it now ; they sounded as if butterflies were hovering among the rosebuds, and he saw his own little ones put out tiny hands to catch the elusive flutterers. The notes conjured up the sweet scent of freshly turned up mould in the woods at Haga and sunbeams dancing on the waters of the little bay. Gustaf Adolf found himself smilingly repeating (though inaudibly) the words about the small " islets in the bay," and when he got as far as—

" Under the shadow of arching trees,
By paths of smoothest sand,
My steed shakes its noble head as it sees
A dust-cloud rise over the land. . . . "

he saw himself mounting his " steed " on that beautiful Sunday afternoon, March 12th. Curiously enough, he had thought of those words at that very hour, and . . . his " steed " had " shaken its noble head " and shied in a most unaccountable manner when he had mounted, for the last time, to ride to . . . ignominy, imprisonment, and exile !

" There was no place I loved as I did Haga . . . none . . . none ! "

He could think no further—he pressed his handkerchief fiercely over his eyes to keep back the unbidden tears.

When Feldt had finished no one clapped . . . the audience seemed to have an intuition that he had been playing something *they* could not understand, but which was quite familiar to the august, uninvited listener ; and now they were waiting to see what he would do or say.

Gustaf Adolf composed himself, got up and thanked the violinist for his exquisite music.

" Come and breakfast with me to-morrow," he said ; " I have the room next to this one on the right, up the corridor."

The last words had been said rather hesitatingly ; he had not yet become accustomed to giving his address when granting an audience. . . .

The following morning, when the Maestro knocked at the door on the right of the corridor, he had to wait a minute or two before being invited to "come in." When he entered he saw the King walking up and down with his hands clasped behind him. The room looked out upon the market-place and was most simply furnished as regards comfort. There was a long narrow couch which might have adorned some Palace or Castle ages ago, for the worn-out and faded covering was of (royal) red damask; in front of this stood a Sutherland table on which the very frugal breakfast was set out; a chiffonier and a few chairs completed the furnishing of the room, and as it was fairly large, it looked rather desolate and empty. The only object at all worth looking at was an oil-painting of a pretty, curly-headed boy, which hung above the couch; from the likeness to his mother's family, Feldt guessed it must be a portrait of the deposed monarch's son.

Gustaf Adolf advanced to meet his guest, who could not help noticing that the black clothes in which his host appeared were terribly old and worn.

"I should like to thank you once more, sir, for your beautiful playing, which called up old memories, both sad and sweet," said Gustaf Adolf in his most genial tones, and as he spoke he gave a quick glance at the picture hanging over the couch. "Let us sit down and begin, sir."

A bottle of liqueur, two glasses, a basket with bread and a plate of butter set out on the table constituted the "breakfast."

Gustaf Adolf half filled both glasses. "Your good health, sir, and again many thanks for the treat you gave me," he said.

Feldt stood opposite him during this little speech, which he acknowledged with a deep bow, as the King emptied his glass and signed to him to do the same. Then Gustaf Adolf took a seat on the couch and indicated a chair to his visitor.

"Sit down and help yourself, sir," he said, proceeding to butter a slice of bread for himself.

The guest did as he was bid. The bread was decidedly stale, but the King seemed to have an excellent appetite and to enjoy his "tartine"; his guest endeavoured to do likewise.

It was the first time that he had been asked to partake of hospitality at a royal table ! He could not get over his astonishment that a man of such character as his host, and who evidently wished to show him (Feldt) gratitude and friendship, should invite him to a meal of stale bread and rather rancid butter, washed down with a small glass of liqueur !

"Your strains enchanted me last night when I was sitting here in the twilight listening, and an irresistible power drew me into the midst of your audience. I am most grateful to you for what I heard in here, and still more so for what I heard in there," said the Colonel, pointing to the adjoining concert-room.

"I should like to present you with a little souvenir for playing 'Gustavus Wasa' and 'Fjäriln vingad syns på Haga,' he continued, suddenly rising from his seat. "I wish I had something which would give you pleasure and show how highly I appreciated your kindness."

For a while he stood deep in thought. When Feldt saw the puzzled, anxious look in his face he thought he must be trying, in vain, to think of what small gift he could find to bestow. All at once a bright inspiration seemed to come to Gustaf Adolf, and his guest, with some curiosity, watched him go to the chiffonier, open it, and take out a good-sized box in which he began rummaging about.

The violinist leant forward and saw that the box contained decorations of gold and silver, such as the large gold "Star of the Order of the Seraphim," the little silver "Maltese Cross" and others, and he was mightily astonished when the King took out the Swedish "Order of the Sword" with the evident purpose of bestowing it upon him.

Gustaf Adolf stood up and signed to Feldt to do the same. And as they stood face to face he pinned the Order on the musician's breast and said : "Keep that in remembrance of me." The words were said with a peculiar inflexion of voice much as he might have used when, as King and Head of the Army, rewarding some specially brave and plucky soldier fresh from the field of battle. The rest of his little speech was more deliberate and hesitating, as though he had been

accustomed to give and gave gladly, and now, alas! . . . had nothing to offer! It was a strange experience for the Russian musician to be receiving the Swedish Decoration of the "Order of the Sword," simply as a little thankoffering for having played "Fjäriln," but, considering the time, place, and attendant circumstances, it touched him more than he would have liked to admit, and with much emotion he bent to kiss the giver's hand and to utter a few half-choked words of thanks. Gustaf Adolf also was moved; he waved his hand as a sign that the audience was at an end, and began to pace up and down as the Maestro left the room,

CHAPTER LII

ST. GALLEN

AT the place where the diligence stopped for the last relay of horses, an elderly passenger got down and informed the driver that he intended doing the rest of the journey on foot. The latter could not make out why an old gentleman, who must be sixty at the least, should prefer walking on to the town all alone along a hot, tiring road, to arriving cool and comfortable in the coach. He ventured to expostulate, but the passenger said it was a lovely day and he preferred to walk, as he had had quite enough of sitting so many hours cramped up in the diligence.

He gave orders that his luggage should be delivered at the "Weisse Rössli" (White Horse), and that the driver should inform the landlord that Colonel Gustafson was following shortly and would require two cosy, pleasant rooms as high up as possible.

When the coach overtook the wayfarer some little time after, the Jehu noticed how slowly and apparently lost in thought he walked; so much so, indeed, that he never even raised his eyes as the lumbering vehicle passed him, but continued looking straight ahead. It certainly was a beautiful autumn day; one might almost have deluded oneself into the belief that it was not really October but late summer, if the fields had not been bare and dry and the summits of the Alps glistening with newly-fallen snow; but there was a certain crispness in the clear, healthful air in spite of the brilliant sunshine, just a little reminder that winter was on its way, and that it was expedient to be seeking snug, warm winter quarters. This was forcibly borne in upon Gustaf Adolf

as he approached the town and saw the swallows circling round the mediæval turrets and towers around St. Gallen, preparatory to their long flight to warmer regions ; and as he passed through the ancient city gate and inquired his way to the "Weisse Rössli," they told him it was by the Multerthor, and showed him how to get there. As soon as he saw it he recognised the old-fashioned building with its large, airy balconies, and remembering that it faced due south and got every ray of sunshine there was to get, he congratulated himself on having had the bright idea of selecting this spot for his winter quarters.

The genial landlord of the "Weisse Rössli (one Master Samuel Näf) stood ready at the door to welcome him, and from within came sounds of fresh and merry children's voices.

"It is my children romping and playing," volunteered mine host, as he led the way up the stairs to the third floor, where the Colonel's luggage had been deposited. "I shall take care that they do not disturb you, sir," he added.

"Oh, just let them romp and play as much as they like—children never worry me ; if I *should* find them too much, I will tell you, landlord."

Colonel Gustafson must have been a sincere lover of children, for he never grumbled, although they woke him up at very early hours in the morning. They scampered up and down-stairs and seemed to be turning the place upside down just outside his door ; but when he was dressed and starting for his morning "constitutional" he saw only a little boy of about seven, sitting on the stone steps with a small basin by his side, intent on blowing soap bubbles ; the elder children had probably gone to school by that time. Colonel Gustafson stopped to watch the child. He held his breath as the boy, with great glee, launched a large, iridescent globe from his clay pipe, and when the beauteous ephemeral thing burst he heaved a deep sigh.

"It looked so firm, it ought not to have burst," he remarked quite seriously to the child, who nodded and replied in a tone of unquestionable certainty : "Now this one *won't* burst," and he puffed out his rosy cheeks to their utmost extent and blew as hard as he could till a larger bubble than the first

fluttered from the pipe. Alas! it was so large and frail that almost ere it had been cast off it collapsed, filling the clear blue eyes that were so anxiously watching its progress with soapy drops that made them smart.

"One ought never to try for such large ones, my little friend," said the old gentleman in a tone of mild rebuke. "By the bye, what is your name, little man?"

"My name is Adolf Näf."

"Now look here, Adolf, this is how you should do it," and the Colonel took up a new pipe lying in reserve on the steps, bent down, stirred the soap-suds in the water, and proceeded to blow a huge bubble, but he did it very slowly and carefully, so that it might rise before it broke. He looked so grave and intent upon what he was doing, as if an old gentleman could have no more important object in life than to blow bubbles and get them to rise!—but this one would not rise, it burst immediately.

"Used people to blow bubbles like that when you were a little boy, Monsieur?" asked the child rather contemptuously.

"No; I never tried when I was a little boy," answered the visitor.

"Why didn't you, then?"

"I did not see other children do it; I had no big brothers and sisters like you have, little man."

"Didn't your mother never blow bubbles with you when you were little?"

"My . . . mother? No, she did not; I don't think *she* had ever tried when she was a little girl. I don't think she *could*—nor anybody else I knew."

"Not your father either?"

"No, neither my father nor any of the ladies or gentlemen. But blow away, little man; I think it is a very pretty and amusing pastime."

"But you mustn't touch them nor as much as breathe upon them when they come near you and want to get past. Father says you ought not to stand when you are blowing bubbles, and one must not blow so hard as you did just now, 'cause then they are sure to burst. Please sit down and hold your breath."

"I don't want to sit down, I would rather stand; but I promise you I'll hold my breath as long as I can. Ah, that one is a beauty now! You are more clever at it than I am—oh, now it has burst!"

"You shouldn't sigh like that when one bubble bursts, 'cause that makes the next one burst too."

"Who says that?"

"Nobody. I say so, 'cause it is so. You ought only to laugh and blow another."

"Right you are, my small friend; now blow a very, very big one and let it fly straight away up to the sun."

"I can't do that—did you ever see one fly right up to the sun?"

"No, I never did, but I always wanted to, and I often tried to make them."

"How did you think you could when you blew so awfully badly and never learnt *how* when you were a little boy? Practice makes perfect, father says, and I'll soon be perfect. Look at that one; did you ever see such a lovely one? Look, look how high it's going—perhaps it means to fly up to the sun."

Both followed the bubble with eager eyes. When at last it burst and fell, the old gentleman sighed more deeply than before . . . but the boy laughed . . . as one ought to do.

The next morning, when the Colonel passed on his walk, the boy was again sitting on the same steps blowing bubbles, and again General Adol' imagined to talk to him. He began and to be initiated into the art of "bubbling" by him.

Adol' started and did his best. When they were alone, he said the Colonel had been doing that he was going to teach him to blow bubbles, and that his (the Colonel's) hands were so stiff he wanted to let them fly that they would burst before they got clear of the pipe. With the superior wisdom of some great old he added: "Well, as you're younger than I am, I'll let you go, and now, if you're not too tired, you may as well try."

Many people wondered how it happened that the erstwhile King of Sweden found the sojourn in the little Swiss town of St. Gallen so pleasant that he remained there longer than he had done anywhere else since he had lost his Crown and begun his wandering life. Was it because of its charming situation in the verdant valley, where the prolific herds of kine and goats grazed peacefully on the green slopes of the hills on which nestled many a pretty hamlet and homely looking châlet, or was he fascinated by the exquisite view from the not very distant Freudenberg, with the Bodensee at its feet, whose limpid waters glistened in the sun to the North, and the mighty snow-capped Alps to the South? Or perhaps the snug little town itself with its narrow, tortuous streets which were never dull or deserted, but always teeming with life and bustle attracted him. It might have been that he liked the people, who were known everywhere as simple, well-mannered folk, kind and courteous to strangers. Whatever the real reason might be, Colonel Gustafson had not moved from one lodging to another, as usual, but had occupied the same two rooms at the "Weisse Rössli" ever since he had come to St. Gallen, and seemed well content to keep them on.

At first his appearance in the streets had attracted a good deal of attention. He had been recognised by the brown coat he had always worn, and by the black poodle who never could be taught to follow his master to heel at a respectful distance, and who, in spite of all remonstrances, persisted in frisking about several yards in front of him. But after a while people had grown accustomed to seeing him about, and did not molest him either by undue curiosity or greeting. Perhaps the secret of his prolonged stay (he had been over two years) at St. Gallen lay in the fact that, being well known there by this time, Colonel Gustafson felt he had more chance of living in peace and quiet in that little town than if he went to a new place, where his unexpected arrival and settling down would certainly excite the attention which year by year became more irksome and distasteful to him.

He had also made friends with the landlord of the "Weisse Rössli" and his family. The man who waited upon him was



THE LITTLE TOWN OF ST. GALLEN, SWITZERLAND, IN 1830

time have broken off all intercourse with his Swiss confrère, who was neither more nor less than a traitor with regard to his friend, in so far as Colonel Gustafson's daughter, the Grand Duchess of Baden, had commissioned him to look after her father and see that he had everything he wanted ; and as the latter was unwilling to allow his children to supplement his simple requirements, it had to be done by stealth and cunning, and good Colonel Scherer had gladly volunteered to be the tool. He was in league with the landlord of the " Weisse Rössli," and it had been agreed that the King of Sweden should only be charged a small part of his expenses, and that the balance should be paid to Näf by the Grand Duchess of Baden, through Colonel Scherer, with the greatest secrecy and caution. Through this medium also his son, Prince (Gustaf) Wasa, had plotted with his father's banker at St. Gallen. At different times he would send small sums to be placed to his father's account ; they were paid out under pretext that they were the result of some good investment Frégé's bank, in Leipzig, had been able to make with part of the Colonel's small capital.

Gustaf Adolf, generally so sharp and suspicious, never discovered the kindly manœuvres carried on behind his back, and often innocently expressed his supreme satisfaction at the shrewdness and vigilance of the bank at St. Gallen to which he had entrusted his financial affairs, and he was loud in his praises of the landlord of the " Weisse Rössli " for the moderate charges he made ! But one fine day, when Colonel Gustafson found a set of new shirts and other necessary articles of gentleman's underwear daintily tied up with ribbon in his drawers, he immediately flung the whole lot on to the floor, and as there was no bell which he could ring in his room, he went down himself to fetch the waiter, whom he grasped tightly by the arm. Pointing to the beautifully sewn and embroidered linen on the floor, he said sternly : " Get these things together and put them into the box in which they came . . . as it was most likely you who unpacked them, you will have no difficulty in folding them again as they should be folded. Never do such a thing again, no matter who may bribe and tempt you ; you

will only give yourself double trouble and annoy *me*. I will write the address myself when you have done up the box." And when that was done he wrote in his large, bold hand :

"To Her Royal Highness, the Grand Duchess Sophia of Baden, Karlsruhe."

"There," he said, "there's the money, and mind that this box is sent off to Karlsruhe by the very next coach."

He had of his own free will given up nearly all he possessed in the world to his children, although it would have enabled him to live conformably to his station and without parsimony. He had thought it only natural that a parent *should* provide for his offspring . . . but it was not fitting that he, who could content himself with so little, should accept charity from his children. Therefore he returned the box with the outfit to his eldest daughter, whom he suspected of being the sender. She had made similar unsuccessful attempts already . . . as had her mother before her ; but, with deep gratitude to a gracious Providence, he very soon after received the news conveyed by his banker, that some speculation he had made with Colonel Gustafson's money had proved highly successful, and the considerable gain would be forwarded by the next post ! This addition to his cash was exceedingly welcome just at this period, it being near the end of the month, when his payments to the landlord were due, which always worried the Colonel, though, in comparison with other innkeepers, his charges certainly *were* extremely moderate ! Gustaf Adolf prided himself on paying every farthing he owed at the time it fell due ; he had never been behind, and hoped he never should be. He held it no disgrace for a man to wear a threadbare coat and live on the third floor of a simple inn, but he held it a disgrace and foul dishonour if the coat a man wore, the food he ate, and the room in which he lived were *not* paid for ; and thanks to the cheapness of living at St. Gallen and the clever manipulation of his capital (!) by Frégé's bank in Leipzig, he had no need to accept alms from his children . . . God be praised !

This last year he had not gone out quite so much as before. An insidious illness just about this time made its first appearance in Europe ; for want of a more suitable name it was

generally known as "la Grippe" (influenza, *sic*). It quickly spread all over the Continent, and though it could in no way be compared with the awful scourge of cholera which had raged in almost every quarter of the globe a few years previously, nor yet with smallpox or other like deadly sicknesses, it could be very bad. It came slowly but surely, creeping on with pains in every limb, high fever, often accompanied by cough and spasms, and, worse than all, it left the sufferer so indescribably weak, weary, and depressed, that it took a long time before those who had been attacked recovered their normal health and strength. Colonel Gustafson had had a bad turn of "la Grippe." He had tried hard to ignore that he was ill, and would on no account allow a medical man to be called in; but he seemed to have lost all inclination for his usual walks or his visits to the Freudenberg after that attack. When he *did* go out he walked slowly and like an old, old man, just once round the market-square and no farther. It fretted him that he was always physically so tired, too tired to walk off the constant restlessness of his spirit. Time after time he made up his mind to go the old walks and to revisit old haunts, but with a groan of weariness he had to turn back ere ever he reached them.

He had so many long, tedious hours on his hands now which must be occupied, and he thought he knew *how* he would occupy them. He would finish writing his Memoirs, and would hand them, together with other papers and documents of his, over to the German Federation. The misfortunes which had beset his path, and which he had so little merited, were of too serious and important a nature to be buried in oblivion. He had no favour to ask except that the documents should be carefully preserved to re-establish his good name, if need were, with posterity. This necessitated an infinity of writing and searching, and he had not the physical strength he used to have. Often it completely failed him, and he was obliged to lie down at full length on the hard sofa and rest awhile before he could go back to his desk. There was no help for it, he would have to engage a secretary. He soon found a superannuated teacher of languages, one Bichsel by name, who,

for a trifling remuneration, was glad to come regularly every day to read the paper to him and write from his dictation.

In one of the public rooms of the inn there stood an ancient piano, rather the worse on the *outside* for having been used as a table, and a little wheezy and out of tone as to the *inside*. When this room was not occupied Colonel Gustafson sometimes beguiled an hour or two playing nothing in particular, extemporising as he went along, though he invariably began with some old tune he had learnt as a child, and his long, thin fingers passing over the keys seemed to impart a certain pathos and melancholy to all he played. When as a small boy he had composed short pieces and military marches, people had been wont to marvel at the "little Crown-Prince's" gift . . . it had been sadly neglected in later days. Now, in his old age, it had returned ; but there was no one to listen to or extol what he composed . . . for he *could* only play when he knew that he was quite alone. Generally his music was slow and plaintive, and he left off the moment anyone came into the room, were it only one of the daughters of the house, to light the lamp.

The landlord's youngest child, who played the piano, would sometimes boldly ask before he shut it down : " Won't you play a duet or two with me now, sir ? "

Before answering he would look all round the room with a sort of look as if he did not quite know where he was ; then, slowly and deliberately, he would reply : " Yes, my dear girl . . . what is it to be to-day ? "

Then the tallow candles in the brass sconces on the piano would be lighted, and the music (all copied by hand) set up before them. The girl played the treble and the Colonel the bass, conscientiously counting half loud and beating time with his foot . . . these duets were mostly selections from Rameau and Couperin.

Occasionally the other sister would come in and little Adolf, who now no longer blew bubbles, but actually went to a " dancing class ! "

Frequently they would beg the Colonel to play a waltz for them to dance to. They were never shy, or afraid of the old man who was so kind to them ; and the Colonel needed no coaxing,

but gladly played the two waltzes he had learnt on purpose for them at St. Gallen. He had never approved of round dances, nor ever played a waltz before, and as he sat there and played he reflected how right he had been never to countenance waltzing . . . it certainly was no dance for a Queen of Sweden to indulge in, either at Stockholm or Gripsholm. No doubt his own daughters would have enjoyed the dance quite as much as did these children of the innkeeper, Näf, when they had been young and merry. The Colonel sighed as his stiff old fingers played on, but the waltz ended with a shrill discord.

“That must do for to-day,” he said; “I am tired now.” Then he rose and abruptly left the room.

CHAPTER LIII

THE LAST SWEDE

TO a weary man seeking rest and repose and desirous that things should pursue "the even tenor of their way," there could surely be nothing more harassing and bewildering than suddenly to find everything around him turned topsy-turvy, the peaceful little town overrun with strangers elbowing their way through the narrow streets; the clean little market-place rendered unsightly by all manner of stalls and booths offering nondescript wares for sale, so cramped that it was next to impossible to get along between them; the usually quiet and respectable inn so overcrowded that there was nothing but hustling on the stairs and jostling in the passages, and waiters and chambermaids, at other times attentive and alert, had to hurry and skurry and had no time for manners or gentle, quiet service.

This then was the condition of St. Gallen at the time of the great Autumn Fair, when people from every Canton in Switzerland and other strangers flocked to the town and rendered existence perfectly unbearable to Colonel Gustafson. Even in his diggings, high up on the third floor, he could hear the constant hum of voices and the bustle of men and women returning at all hours of the night. They laughed and talked and did business and made bargains with an utter disregard of time and place, and more often than not finished the evening with singing patriotic songs which, heard from a distance, and to a man who went to bed early and often lay awake for hours together, had no music in them, and sounded more like brawling than singing. The Fair was in full swing this autumn of the year of grace 1836. The town was practically invaded by

strangers, so much so that the landlord of the "Weisse Rössli" was compelled to let the room which was on the other side of the corridor, facing the two occupied by the Colonel, and which on that gentleman's account he always kept tenantless, knowing what an intense dislike he had to having any strange lodger at such close quarters.

Not only was the landlord of the "Weisse Rössli" flattered and gratified at having such an exalted personage as "Colonel Gustafson" living under his roof, but he and his had grown to feel a real affection for the kindly old man, and thought it the most natural thing in the world that *his* comfort and well-being should be their *first* consideration. None of the awful prophecies with which Näf had been favoured when the Colonel first took up his abode there had proved correct. . . . Näf had been warned of the frequent, unpleasant scenes in store for him with the Colonel, who had a violent and hasty temper. It might have been so in his *younger* days, but *now* his outbursts of temper were so rare and his fits of irritability and impatience were only exhibited at such long intervals, that any landlord might think himself lucky if he had no more trouble with his guests than Näf had with this high-born gentleman. When the Colonel was displeased or put out he was sometimes betrayed into letting a strong word or two escape him, which was but natural, but he mostly took refuge in silence, and it was only the sullen, unamiable expression of his face which revealed that his choler was up. If he were in a pleasant mood he could bear being contradicted, provided it were done in a respectful and courteous manner; he would even tolerate a little banter, and occasionally go so far as to make a joke on his own account.

To the sorrowing and poor he was *most* kind and, as far as his means permitted, he never sent an applicant away empty-handed. It must be admitted that he was self-willed, eccentric, and entirely *unlike* other men, and the most marvellous tales about him were circulated in the town. Amongst other things it was reported that one Kunkler, a lawyer, had been called in to the "Weisse Rössli" several times, and had received instructions to take proceedings against the editor of the

Allgemeine Zeitung (daily paper) of Augsburg, for persistently referring to him as "formerly King of Sweden," a title which Colonel Gustafson maintained he considered in the light of a gratuitous insult, as he desired to be known only by the name under which he now transacted all business matters and with which he signed all documents.

But these minor and, in themselves, very harmless peculiarities could well be overlooked and even respected in one who was so considerate and gave so little trouble in private everyday life. The great difficulty was his increasing dislike to attracting notice or attention. With the best will in the world the host of the "Weisse Rössli" could not prevent people staring at him on the stairs or in the passage. When Näf perceived how assiduously Colonel Gustafson avoided all intercourse with any of his former subjects, he did what he could to keep all Swedes away. On two or three occasions several had called at the inn, but had been refused admittance to the Colonel, and Näf had so much tact and so much consideration for him that when any of that nationality inquired for rooms at the "Weisse Rössli," he invariably expressed his "regret that he had none at his disposal at present."

Now the room in question, facing those of the Colonel, had been let for the duration of the Fair to a gentleman who had already stayed at the house a few months back, though only for one day, and as he spoke German with a *Liefland accent, Näf naturally surmised that he hailed from that province. This stranger had not come on business, nor for the Fair; he was only passing through St. Gallen on his way somewhere else. His age might have been anything between thirty and forty. He was refined in appearance, and his manner clearly betokened that he belonged to the upper class, and as he also had expressed fears of being disturbed by the noise, the landlord thought it better to put *him* into that room than to run the risk of, perhaps, letting it to a person who might annoy and worry the Colonel.

Näf's confidence in this new lodger was, nevertheless, destined to be rudely shaken, for not much more than one short half-hour after his installation, the newly-arrived lodger

* One of the Baltic Provinces of Russia.

stepped across the corridor and knocked loudly at the door of number twelve, one of the rooms tenanted by Colonel Gustafson.

On the invitation to "come in," the visitor entered.

The Colonel thought it was only the waiter, and made no effort to rise from his semi-recumbent position on the sofa. His head rested on a couple of faded cushions, worked in cross-stitch, and he was reading a bound volume of old papers, which he threw aside as he slowly turned to see who it was who had come in. The black poodle, which had been lying on the couch, too, had jumped down and was barking furiously at the intruder, so the Colonel knew it could not be the waiter. When he saw it was a stranger, he sharply looked him up and down and rose to prevent his coming farther into the room.

"You have made a mistake, sir," he said curtly; "this is not your room, but mine."

But the intruder was not one whit abashed.

"I must offer my abject apologies, sir, for venturing to knock; you will recollect, sir, that we had a little conversation together a month or two ago. Quite by accident I happened to be shown into the dining-room here one day when you were playing some dance music for the young people of the house; and I took the liberty of . . ."

"Yes, yes, of course. I recognise you now; you come from Liefland—or don't you? The landlord told me so, and said he had let the room opposite mine to a Liefland gentleman for a few days . . . so I presume it was you he meant?"

The tone in which this was said was not quite so irritable as before, still the expression of the Colonel's face was not particularly kind or encouraging.

"You have been rightly informed, sir; I am occupying that room, and as every place in the diligence is booked for four or five days ahead already, I shall be obliged to remain here longer than I intended, and just now there is little beauty or comfort to be enjoyed at St. Gallen."

"That is so, sir; these wretched fairs upset everything."

"It was on account of my compulsory stay here at this very inopportune season that I took the liberty of seeking out the only person I was acquainted with, and I should esteem it a

great favour if you would allow me occasionally, sir, to have a little talk with you to pass the time."

The Colonel scrutinised the speaker with the same cold look, but there must have been something attractive in the stranger's appearance or, perhaps, in the tone of his voice, for after having fidgeted for a while first with one foot then with the other, the Colonel replied in rather a surly tone which yet implied no snub: "I am very busy all day long, and go out very little. But will you not sit down a few minutes now?"

He resumed his seat on the sofa and pointed to a chair on the other side of the table. The visitor glanced furtively round the room whilst the Colonel shifted the papers from the couch on to the table. This room, the stranger thought, was even more poorly furnished than the one opposite; there, at least, the couch was not quite threadbare nor the wooden table cracked in so many places. In the Colonel's room the chairs were mostly dilapidated and the curtains of spotted net were all in holes. This room seemed to communicate with another, presumably the Colonel's sleeping apartment. The faded chintz of the coverlet was visible through the door, as was also an old rickety chest of drawers. Evidently the lodger was indifferent to the lack of furniture and to the deficiencies of such as there was. There was not a single thing in the larger room that could recall old memories to the Colonel's mind; no portraits of dear, defunct relatives or friends adorned the bare walls, no glass shades protecting cunningly wrought bunches of hair-flowers, or willows casting weeping branches over miniature tombstones stood about, no pencil sketches or paintings in oil of cities or places in his native land. The only thing that might be of interest in the room to an inquisitive stranger, and throw a little light on the character of its tenant, was a heap of papers closely written on both sides and scattered on chairs, desk, and couch.

The intruder himself had to break the silence at last—that is, if he meant to renew the acquaintance and repeat his visits, as he fully intended. It was obvious that the Colonel had nothing to say to *him*.

So the stranger began: "St. Gallen is a nice little town, and

the weather is very fine, considering the time of year. But do you not find this room rather cold in the winter, sir ? ”

Again there must have been something in the stranger's voice which struck the Colonel, the simple question alone would not have brought such a deep colour to his pale face, and he examined his interlocutor with piercing eyes. After a few minutes he replied : “ I do rather ; but when it gets too cold I have a fire.” Then in order to divert attention from his own person, *he* put a question : “ Have you come here direct from home, from your native land . . . Liefland, was it not ? ”

“ I suppose I ought to answer that question in the affirmative, since everybody in Switzerland tells me I talk German with a strong Russian accent.”

“ That is as it may be ; at any rate, you speak very pure and pretty German.”

“ I am obliged, sir, for your kindness in saying that. But in reply to your question, I must tell you that I have been travelling for a long time already.”

“ And may I inquire, is it for pleasure that you are travelling, sir ? ”

“ To that I can answer both ‘ yes ’ and ‘ no ’ . . . I am travelling for the sake of change. Two years ago I had the great sorrow of losing my dear wife, and I did not seem able to remain in the big, empty house alone any longer.”

“ Ah, yes ; travel makes the best change.”

“ I suppose you, sir, have travelled much and far ? ”

The Colonel nodded assent. “ I have, but not so far as I wished to do.”

A far-away look came into his eyes, and not until he spoke again did the dazed expression leave his face.

“ What countries have you visited, sir ? ” he asked, but without any great manifestation of interest.

“ I have been in Saxony, the Austrian Provinces, and Switzerland. I expect all of these are known to you, sir.”

“ That they are. And where do you intend going when you leave St. Gallen ? ”

“ First to Paris.”

“ P-a-r-i-s . . . oh ! ”

The poodle, who had been quietly lying on the sofa, watching the stranger with blinking eyes, now suddenly jumped down and joyfully wagged his tail.

"I was not talking to *you* . . . lie down," said the Colonel. "The dog's name is 'Paris,' and he answers to it, as you see, almost too well. Lie down, I say—quick!"

The dog jumped on to the couch again and lay down beside his master, though he kept a watchful eye on the stranger, noting every movement he made.

The Colonel patted the dog's head and stroked his back. The visitor could not help seeing how coarse the material was of which the Colonel's grey coat was made, and how out at elbows!

It was a new, curious, and rather embarrassing experience for him to find himself sitting there *tête-à-tête* with "Colonel Gustafson," and to have to be so careful with every word he said, so as not to betray that he was not a Lieflander, but a . . . SWEDE! If he had been announced as such, he knew that he would never have been admitted. After the first meeting with Gustaf Adolf in the inn-parlour, when he had been an unseen listener to the old man's improvised, melancholy music, and when, on returning from a walk, he had seen how kindly and readily, though with an expression betokening utter weariness of both mind and body, he had played merry dance music for the children of the house, the stranger had taken a keen interest in Näf's lodger, whose face seemed curiously familiar to him, and he could not rest until he had found out what he could about him. For months since then, thoughts of the deposed King of Sweden had haunted him to such a degree that, being now in the same place, nay, under the same roof, he thought he should like to become a little better acquainted with him. He was both perplexed and astonished that luck had so far favoured him, and that he had actually been received, if not with *empressement*, at least with inoffensive indifference and politeness, which counted for something in a man who had the reputation of being able to utterly crush with a look or a word. But the intruder would have to keep a sharp look out not to arouse the remotest suspicion either of his own nationality or of being cognisant that Colonel Gustafson was any other

than he was supposed to be . . . an officer of rank with a very limited income.

When the latter continued stroking the dog in silence, the visitor thought it was time to take himself off, so he got up from his chair and said : " I really must not trouble you any longer now, but I must thank you for the pleasant hour spent in your company, and I should feel myself highly honoured, sir, if some time you would come to my room ; if there were a possibility of . . . "

" I shall be pleased to return your visit, sir," replied the Colonel as he accompanied the stranger to the door and held it open for him ; but before bending his head in a farewell bow, he said in his most engaging manner : " Shall I light you along the passage ? It has got dark so quickly, and they have forgotten to light the lamp. Wait one minute."

He struck fire and held the guttering tallow candle up aloft, so that his visitor might not mistake the way to his door. " You can light your candle by mine," he called after him. The stranger thanked him, and presently reappeared with his brass candlestick.

Shrill sounds of laughter and singing surged up from downstairs.

" It is well to be high up, away from the noise and commotion," remarked the Colonel, bowing once more.

" True for you, sir. I hope I have not tired you too much ; I shall keep quite quiet now."

" So shall I. Good night, sir ; sleep well."

The stranger bowed in acknowledgment. " Good night, Colonel. Pleasant dreams and sweet repose ! "

" I seldom dream, sir ; my sleep is mostly sound and dreamless, but I never sleep much. Good night."

Then the Colonel closed his door and carefully turned the key. His neighbour heard him trying it several times to make quite sure that it was really locked.

Soon silence prevailed on the third floor, only the banging of doors admitting fresh customers was heard at intervals from below.

.

Whether it was that Colonel Gustafson had risen early, or that his neighbour had had a bad night and consequently had got up late, it so happened that when the former knocked at his door, the stranger was sitting before the glass, in his shirt sleeves, in the act of shaving. For a moment he thought he could not possibly admit a visitor whilst he was dressing, but on second thoughts it struck him that he had, perhaps, better open the door, or the visit might never be repeated.

Therefore he cried lustily, "Come in," to give the impression that he thought it could be no one but a waiter at that hour. But when he saw it was the Colonel in a brown coat, just one degree less shabby than his grey one, he uttered an exclamation of surprise and advanced to greet him.

"I make my apologies for calling so early, but I have a great deal of writing to do later on, and such near neighbours need not stand on ceremony."

"I am delighted at your goodness at returning my visit so quickly, and am only sorry I got up so late, and that my room is not in such order as I could wish."

"It is very pleasant here ; light and cheerful, like the rest of the house. Don't take any notice of my being here, but go on with your shaving."

He took a seat on the sofa, which happened to be placed at an angle of the glass that, without the Colonel's being at all conscious of it, the Swedish traveller could watch all his movements and every change of expression on his features. He profited by the opportunity ; he could observe him thus much better than he had been able to do on the previous evening. He remembered that, in his early days, he had seen scores of pictures and portraits of the man sitting there—but they had all disappeared now as though he had never existed. The stiff, erect carriage, the slender figure, the rather prominent blue eyes, the well-shaped nose and the full lips had struck him forcibly the first time he had met him at the inn. He was sure he had seen him or his picture somewhere at home in Sweden. Of course, he had aged . . . there were lines and furrows in the face, and the back was slightly bent ; the chief difference, however, lay in the expression of the features.

The habitual icy coldness, the obstinate, self-willed look of defiance and determination, the sarcastic curl of the lip which was commented upon with so much bitterness and ill-feeling now in Sweden, had given place to an expression of resignation won after a long, hard struggle. He bore altogether the look of a man who had gone through much, and who had now nothing more to fear, to hope for, or to expect in this world.

The thin hands had retained their beautiful shape, and it was pathetic to see them mechanically toying with a ball of string which had been accidentally left lying on the table . . . tying and untying the ends time after time.

The conversation between the two men rather flagged. The one was too much taken up with shaving and watching his visitor in the glass, the attention of the other was too deeply engaged in disentangling the knots in the string !

At last the latter looked up and said in a tone which had no coldness nor indifference in it : " I suppose you have not been quite alone in the world since you lost your wife, have you, sir ? Have you children or parents or other relatives living ? You are still a young man yourself."

He had put these questions with so much sympathy and feeling that the man addressed felt an almost irresistible desire to break down his visitor's reticence—to get him to express what he felt with regard to the past or to confess that he was as indifferent to his fate as he was commonly reported to be. Hence he answered, on the spur of the moment, without giving himself time for reflection or for weighing the consequences :

" Thanks for your kind inquiries, sir. Oh, yes, I still have several near relatives living ; amongst others an uncle, a brother of my father's, who is living at St. Petersburg on a pension rather larger than is usually accorded to superannuated officers ; he has it because he was badly wounded in that last campaign against Gustaf Adolf ; you know, Colonel, that unfortunate King of Sweden who is supposed to be living somewhere in Switzerland at the present moment."

He stopped and looked in the glass to see what effect his words had produced. Apparently none ! Not by the slightest movement or change of expression did the Colonel betray

that he had ever borne the Royal title he had just heard named. The Swedish traveller was completely nonplussed ! He forgot to take into consideration that that name and title were never absent from the Colonel's mind ; he had spoken the words with a kind of foreboding that something would come of his effrontery.

But nothing came of it at all !

Colonel Gustafson remained sitting where he was, and continued fumbling at the knots and tangles in the string and said never a word.

At last, when the silence grew too oppressive, the owner of the room thought he *must* say something ; he had finished shaving, and was arranging his tie in front of the glass.

" Generally old soldiers, who have nothing but their pensions to live on, have to be very careful," he said, as he put on his coat and took a seat opposite the Colonel, who slowly raised his eyes and replied with the artlessness of a child :

" Old soldiers who have only a small pension should establish themselves at the ' Weisse Rössli ' ; you have no idea how cheap living is in this house, only one must make some agreement about board."

He proceeded to name the sum he paid, which was, in truth, so absurdly small that the Swede quite agreed that the " Weisse Rössli " was, indeed, an ideal place where people with scant means could find good food and lodging for little outlay.

" I paid more than double that sum at the ' Giant,' at Hanau, for inferior board and uncomfortable rooms ; so I did at Spa, and other places where I have stayed in Holland. At the ' Swan ' in Leipzig, the ' Morian ' at Dresden, and the ' Golden Lion ' at Aix-la-Chapelle, too, it was infinitely more expensive in comparison with the food here ; and no one can deny that the landlord, Näf, is a straightforward, honest fellow," the Colonel added.

The Swede listened with a curious mixture of feelings. He could not get over his surprise at the intimate knowledge the former King of Sweden seemed to have of the arrangements and charges of second and third-rate inns in so many different towns. Then the conversation passed on to other topics—

recollections and incidents of travel; and the Swede was not slow in discovering that in places where *he* had lived at the grandest first-class hotels and been served by an army of obsequious waiters, the Colonel, who had probably arrived on foot, not even with the common coach, had been obliged to seek shelter in the meanest and cheapest inns, where he most likely had had to take his meals with ordinary yokels and market-folk. Naturally, he neither spoke of that nor indeed anything concerning himself, but his interlocutor was wide awake, and took a great interest in his visitor, so that by judiciously disguised questions and remarks, and putting two and two together, he could make a pretty shrewd guess how things had been. He was also exceedingly astonished at the tremendous power of will of the old man who, born and bred in the purple, denied himself the smallest approach to luxury and comfort, and obstinately persisted in living in a poor little Swiss inn, when it only rested with himself to end his days, as befitted his station, in some ancient palace or castle.

Was it not a well-known fact that one of his sons-in-law, the Duke of Oldenburg, who had married his youngest daughter Cecilia, had placed the Castle of Jever at his disposal as a residence for life? But that generous offer had been refused, as well as many another from those most nearly related to him.

A modest knock at the door was presently heard.

"It is not at this door, it is at number thirteen, which is my bedroom," said the Colonel, as he left his seat with a sigh and pushed aside the ball of string, leaving sundry knots he had not been able to undo.

"It is my secretary knocking. There is much writing to be done to-day, so I must go now. But as you are not leaving before the day after to-morrow, I shall hope to take a little turn with you in the morning and show you the town, though I very seldom go out at all now, and when I do, it is never for long; but it may cheer you up to look about you a little if I go with you."

"I shall like it immensely, thank you."

"Very well, then. Come into my room to-morrow about this time. Good-bye for the present, neighbour; *à demain!*"

When the Colonel had gone to his room, the Swede several times 'sapiantly' shook his head. What was this unexpected meeting and the Colonel's kindness and courtesy towards a perfect stranger going to lead to ?

What he did *not* know was, that, unlike other people, Colonel Gustafson had never for a moment been deceived by the stranger's accent. From the very first he had been aware that the man was a Swede. Curiously enough, for once he had not resented that fact ; on the contrary, he had himself been not a little astonished at feeling a sort of soothing satisfaction in detecting the well-known familiar inflection of the Swedish tongue in the accent with which he spoke German . . . only the stranger must on no account be allowed to find it out ; he must be left under the delusion that he had played his rôle of " Lieflander " to perfection. The Colonel did not wish to be overrun in future with calls from his former subjects, just because he had happened to take a liking to this particular one and his Swedish sing-song manner of speech ; and that the expression of his face had awakened old scenes and memories, which somehow did not in this instance hurt or sadden the Colonel as they usually did . . . he could not have told why . . . he only knew that it was so.

That night he slept badly, and, in despair, at last got up and went to the window to gaze at the stars ; the night was chill, and he shivered as he stood watching the clouds. As he had said, he seldom had any dreams ; but if he had not been so positively sure that he had had no sleep, he would have been inclined to believe that he had dreamt he was at Haga, giving orders to one of the gardeners as to how he wished a certain flower-bed beneath his windows laid out.

" I do not want roses nor creepers up the windows," he thought he had said ; " I will have forget-me-nots and yellow wallflowers . . . the bed shall represent the Swedish colours."

Then he had started up out of his sleep. His saying that out aloud had woke him ; it came, no doubt, from his having heard the melodious tones of the Swedish voice the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night, when his opposite neighbour had been giving instructions to the waiter. He

had not been able to go to sleep again, but had got up and stood by the window until daylight came and the people busy at the Fair began to be noisy on landing and stairs.

When the Swede, in the course of the morning, knocked at his door, the Colonel was ready to go with him. He had only to slip into another coat, and whilst he was doing so in his bedroom and had closed the door, the visitor's eye accidentally fell upon a pile of papers, and he wondered what the Colonel had been reading so early in the day with so much apparent interest. One paper lay open on the table by the couch where the Colonel had been sitting, and when the stranger hurriedly glanced at it and some others lying there, he found that they were ancient "dailies" recording details of the wars of 1807, 1808, and 1809. How odd it seemed !

Was Gustaf Adolf reading those weird accounts in order at length to grasp *why* things had gone with him as they *had* done ? Were his thoughts so engrossed with the past, in which he had played such a prominent part, so utterly unlike his present existence, and if so, how could he endure it ?

Presently he came in again fully equipped. He had on a black felt hat, a good deal the worse for wear, the same brown coat buttoned up to the chin, and a simple black silk stock wound tightly round his neck. They started for a preliminary turn round the square, the black poodle bounding in front of them. A few passers-by respectfully raised their hats to the Colonel, the greater number of pedestrians took no notice of him whatever. . . His companion's mind dwelt on the papers on the table in room No. 12 of the "Weisse Rössli," dog-eared and full of pencil marks and notes on the margin. . . .

The next morning early the stranger was to take his departure. Rather to his dismay, when he went to say "good-bye" to the Colonel the night before, the latter had said that he need not do so yet, for that he (the Colonel) meant to go with him to the inn whence the diligence started and see him off and wish him a pleasant journey. He did not mind having to get up early when he had some definite object in view ; the nights were

much too long, in all conscience, as it was. He requested his neighbour to be good enough to knock at his door when he was ready, and they would go that short way in company.

So it was about half-past four the next morning when the Swedish gentleman, having first seen his luggage carried down, knocked at the door of No. 12. All was quiet within, and he was almost inclined to think the Colonel must have started before him. However, on knocking again he thought he heard a faint "Come in." He tried the door; it was unlocked, and he went in. There was no one there, but from the adjoining room there came the same feeble voice: "Come in here, sir," it said. "I was not well in the night, and so could not get up this morning. I am very sorry not to be able to keep my promise and go to the coach with you, but I really can *not*; I felt so bad in the night."

The tallow-dip in the brass candlestick had burnt down to the socket, and the long, flaring, unsnuffed wick cast but a faint glimmer of light upon the narrow bed on which the Colonel lay. He was very white, and looked exceedingly worn and tired as he took the stranger's hand and pressed it warmly to say "good-bye."

"I wish you a very happy, prosperous journey," he said, "and at its termination a joyful coming home."

The stranger bent over the attenuated white hand which grasped his own vigorous one, and silently and reverently imprinted a respectful kiss upon it; his lips moved as if he wanted to say something, but he did not speak.

The Colonel looked at him curiously. *His* lips also quivered, and *he* seemed about to say something, but no words came. His head sank back upon the pillow, but his eyes followed the departing stranger wistfully. . . . The latter turned at the door and made one more profound, respectful farewell bow to the Colonel, who had long been unused to such courtesy. Then . . . with lingering and unwilling steps he left the chamber.

CHAPTER LIV

EPILOGUE

THE familiar figure of Colonel Gustafson was never again seen in the streets or market-place of St. Gallen.

After this attack he never left his rooms, and though he was by no means a troublesome patient, he was an exceedingly self-willed and obstinate one.

No doctor was allowed to come near him, and all consultations had to be by letter! Neither would he take medicine, and it was only in the beginning of February that he consented to a "fältskär" (a so-called "Leech") coming to apply leeches to his chest.

The aged teacher of languages, who for the last few years had been his confidant and amanuensis, his adviser and factotum, was frequently with him. The landlord came up every day to inquire how he was, and the daughters of the house often peeped in, also little Adolf, the blower of bubbles!

He had given strict orders that none of his own children or relations should be informed of his illness . . . he did not want to see any of them.

He said he did not *feel* particularly ill, and if only he could get rid of that sensation of utter weariness and the racking cough which shook his attenuated frame, he was positive his strong constitution would enable him to pull through.

Suddenly, peacefully and without pain, he breathed his last on the morning of February 7th, 1836.

When the representatives of the Prince of * Wasa and the Grand Duchess of Baden, who had been sent to St. Gallen

* Hereditary title of the Crown Princes of Sweden.

immediately on the announcement of their father's demise, entered the small bedroom No. 13 at the "Weisse Rössli," now the chamber of Death, they reverently lifted the sheet covering the face of the late King.

Both gentlemen were struck simultaneously with the likeness of the features to another "Gustaf Adolf (II)"; the resemblance had been remarkable in life, and death accentuated it still more, though it was not his great namesake, Gustaf Adolf II, to whom Gustaf Adolf IV had borne the greatest likeness in life, and "Colonel Gustafson" in death. His resemblance was even greater to another King of Sweden, one whom as Crown-Prince he had looked upon as his idol, his hero, after whose example he had endeavoured to mould his life both inwardly and outwardly; and the long, thin figure with the lofty forehead, stretched on that narrow bed, certainly vividly recalled to mind the form of Charles XII, whose corpse had been lovingly borne by Swedish arms across the snowy slopes of the North more than one hundred and twenty years before.

That night the mortal remains of him who died as "Colonel Gustafson," but who had for the space of seventeen years been known as "Gustaf Adolf IV, King of Sweden," were embalmed and taken to the church of Saint Magni, where a funeral service, attended by nearly all the residents of St. Gallen, was held at the hour of midnight in the sombrely draped chancel.

During the ceremony a marvellous phenomenon of Nature occurred, which none of those present were ever likely to forget, and the story of which was handed down to children and children's children.

As the service proceeded an unusually brilliant Aurora Borealis appeared in the heavens . . . its rays shone through the church windows and rested upon the coffin, a tribute from the North to the Northern King! With the last words of the solemn Benediction, the glorious light disappeared as suddenly as it had come! . . .

.

Thus ended the life of one whose uprightness, love of truth, and many other sterling qualities, if judiciously directed,

would have made Gustaf Adolf IV a King in a thousand, though there is but little doubt that the sad scenes and experiences of his childhood and early youth, and the lack of some one who could "understand" (?) that peculiar nature, in a certain degree unbalanced his mind and tainted it with melancholia and religious mania.—(TRANSLATOR'S NOTE).

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